

# THE COLLECTIVE MOURNING PLAY IN THE MOVIES: “BABAM VE OĞLUM” AND “BEYNELMİLEL”

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The Collective Mourning Play in the Movies: “Babam ve Oğlum” and  
“Beynelmilel”  
Sinemada Kolektif Yas Oyunu: “Babam ve Oğlum” ve “Beynelmilel”

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- 2) Travma
- 3) Psikanaliz
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Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

- 1) The Military Coup of September 12
- 2) Trauma
- 3) Psychoanalysis
- 4) Cinema
- 5) Collective Mourning

## **Abstract**

The Collective Mourning Play in the Movies: “Babam ve Oğlum” and  
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Cultural activities help societies and individuals to mourn and work through the traumatic experiences just like how the play functions for the child to realize and symbolize the difficult experiences. Following this argument, this thesis assumes that the movies which treat on the period of the Military Coup of September 12 reflect the effort of dealing with this difficult period. In this study, two selected films (“Babam ve Oğlum” and “Beynelmilel”) have been subjected to a qualitative analysis within the framework of psychoanalytic theories.

When we scrutinize the symbolic structures of the films and the ways they discuss trauma, we understand that they display the need for mourning, the ways of remembering and defenses. Moreover they reproduce this need and the ways of coping with it for their spectators.

## Özet

Sinemada Kolektif Yas Oyunu: “Babam ve Oğlum” ve “Beynelmilel”

Fatma Tanış

Kültürel faaliyetler, toplum ve bireyin travmatik deneyimlerinin yasının tutulması ve bu deneyimlerin derinliğine çalışılmasında aracı olurlar; aynı oyunun çocuğun zor deneyimleri kavramasında ve sembolize etmesinde aracı olması gibi. Buradan yola çıkarak, Türkiye’de 12 Eylül 80 sonrası yapılmış ve darbeyi ele alan filmlerin bu zor deneyimle baş etme çabasını barındırdığı var sayılmıştır. Bu çalışmada seçilen iki film (“Babam ve Oğlum” ve “Beynelmilel”) psikanalitik teoriler çerçevesinde niteliksel bir analize tabi tutulmuştur.

Filmlerin sembolik yapısına ve travmayı nasıl ele aldıklarına baktığımızda bu filmlerin yas tutmaya dönük bir ihtiyacı ve bununla ilgili hatırlama biçimlerini, savunmaları ortaya koyduklarını; ayrıca izleyici için bu ihtiyacı ve baş etme yollarını yeniden ürettiklerini görürüz.

*babama...*

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## **1. Introduction**

The story of human being inevitably engages the lacks, losses, namely the traumatic experiences. The quality of these experiences, the individual (internal) and the environmental (external) factors determine the intensity of the damages. At these kinds of situations, the individual's internal world, namely the psyche tries to cope with trauma through defenses and fantasies. On the other hand, because trauma complicates or blocks the symbolization and narration of the experience, the memory of the event can not be created properly. Instead, the internal conflicts and fantasies, bodily memories and unbearable affects possess the subject. These responses are the symptoms, the coping strategies and the effort to work through trauma for the purposes of mourning the losses and narrating them as a coherent story.

If we consider a collective trauma, both the cultural sphere and the individuals are affected by the consequences of the catastrophic event. Thus the nature of trauma and its processes will gain a collective meaning bearing the stamp of individual experiences. At this point, psychoanalytic concepts may bring to us an interpretive frame for understanding collective life and the cultural products (i.e. literature, cinema, visual art) can be the most meaningful and explanatory subject of our analysis. Considering a collective trauma, cultural products tell us not only about the traumatic experience itself, but they manifest the manners that individuals and the society deal with trauma.

The popular arts (e.g. movies) bear the common ideology and the collective symbolizations. In addition to this, when a collective trauma is into question, the artistic products have the function of reparation not only for the artist and the listener/viewer, but for the society.

The answers of how the collective stories are displayed and try to cope (mourn and work through) tell us something about both the collective life and the individuals. Along with television, there is no doubt that cinema is the most popular artistic form which deals with individual and collective traumas. Movies bear “the text where social life produced and reproduced” and through which we own the chance to observe “the dynamic structure of society” (Durmaz, 1999, p. 104).

The military coup of September 12, 1980 is one of the most important collective traumas in Turkey. This study assumes that the movies (which treat on the period of September 12) reflect the effort of dealing with this period. In this sense two films will be analyzed, which handle the period inaugurated after the military coup of September 12, 1980. These two recently shot films became very popular and made great success at the box office. They also have parallel stories including the same thematic elements. This is why the films of *Babam ve Oğlum* (Çağan Irmak, 2005) and *Beynelmilel* (Sırrı Sürreyya Önder, 2006) were chosen as the subjects of analysis.

This study accepts that cultural sphere is the extended version of transitional space which covers both the subjective experiences and the external reality for individual and society. Thus myths, collective stories and

aesthetic experiences are the collective plays of the grown and socializing children. Cultural activities help societies and individuals to mourn and work through the traumatic experiences just like how the play functions for the child to realize and symbolize the difficult experiences.

Keeping in mind that (collective) traumas should be dealt not only from subjective experiences but also from historical and political aspects and cultural products are also ideological mediums, the mentioned two films are discussed from a psychoanalytic conceptualization. The main question brought about in this study is what they signify, what kind of meanings they construct in terms of trauma and how they bear the signs of trauma. The answers also present the holding capacity of films that make it possible for the viewers to overcome the destructiveness of traumatic fact by the way of symbolizing, remembering and working through the experience.

In the analysis, firstly the materials of the films, namely the structures of narrative (themes, characters, the development of events), the visual and auditory features, will be interpreted in the terms of theoretical discussions about trauma. This interpretation will be based on the psychoanalytic theories of fantasies, conflicts, defense mechanisms and needs which are related with the experience of trauma. Then, the manner in which the characteristics of films can affect on the viewer and how the viewer can experience the films will be analyzed.

**Questions:**

The analysis will be made in the light of the following questions:

1. What kind of traumatic losses are narrated?
2. What kind of symbolic space is beared by the films?
3. How the processes of melancholia, mourning and working through are presented?
4. What kind of possible experiences the films pledge for their viewers?

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. What is September 12?**

On September 12, 1980 one of the most dark and traumatic periods was opened in the history of Turkey. Turkish Armed Forces commanded by Kenan Evren seized control of government and the military junta endured until 6 November 1983. That was the third intervention of the army in the political history of Turkey. After the Military Coup of September 12 the social and political life of the country was dramatically affected by the antidemocratic regime and the violence of inhuman politics. During this period, the military dictatorship controlled the cultural life and forbid the freedom of media. Under these conditions people voted in the referendum of 1982, with 92.7 % of votes, the military made constitution was ‘accepted’ and Kenan Evren became the president of the Turkish Republic. The general election was held in 1983 under limited political rights which resulted in the election of the “Motherland Party”<sup>1</sup> headed by Turgut Özal as government. Particularly the forward effects of the coup were not only limited to social rights but also neoliberal policies became dominant in the economy which caused harsh poverty, increased conservatism and nationalist discourse both in politics and everyday life.

Before and after the military coup many people were exposed to psychical and psychological violence both from government or military and fascist groups which were informally supported by the state forces. Some

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<sup>1</sup> “Anavatan Partisi”

people were injured permanently, while some of them died. During and after the military junta all forms of torture have been extensively used (Paker, 2003). The relatives, family and friends of these people also witnessed horror, they were not able to contact with them and were constantly afraid of losing or actually loosed them. Either directly or indirectly a wide range of people experienced the catastrophe. Some quantitative results demonstrate and reflect the horrible face of military coupe listed below (Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 2000):

650.000 people were taken in custody

1.683.000 people were recorded as “*dangerous*”

In 210.000 trials, 230.000 people were sentenced

7.000 people were convicted to death penalty

517 people were fined death penalty; among those 50 were hanged

The files of 259 people who were judged for death penalty, were sent to the Parliament

71.000 people were judged according to the bylaws of 141, 142 and 163

98.404 people were judged for being members of political organizations

388.000 people deprived from the right of getting passport

30.000 people were fired, because they were seen “*dangerous*”

14.000 people were deprived of citizenship

30.000 people went abroad as political refugees

300 people died “*suspiciously*”

171 people died because of torture

937 films were banned as “*dangerous*”

The functioning of 23.677 organizations were stopped

3.854 educators, 120 lecturers and 47 judges were fired

4.000 years of prison penalty was called for 400 journalists

The journalists were penalized totally in 3.315 years 6 months

31 journalists were sent to the jail

300 journalists were attacked



3 journalists were killed with gun  
During 300 days newspapers were not published  
303 court cases were opened for 13 major newspapers  
39.000 kg newspapers and journals were destroyed  
299 people died in prisons  
144 people died “*suspiciously*”  
14 people died in hunger strikes  
16 people got shot while they were “*running*”  
95 people died in “*shootout*”  
73 people were reported to die “*naturally*”  
43 people were reported to kill themselves

In short the period inaugurated by the *coup d'état* of September 12 constitutes a dark period in the recent history of Turkey; it is a trauma that was not spoken and not mourned (Kahraman, 2007; Sancar, 2007). The culture and politics of denying are not only valid for September 12; the history of Turkey bears many other collective traumas, which are not spoken properly<sup>2</sup>. Although September 12 affects and destroys the social and cultural tissue during and after the period, the military coup and its actors have never been judged officially (Suner, 2006). In fact, Turkey fails to confront its history which is a very complicated process and its acquisition depends upon constituting justice and processes of “apology” (Sancar, 2007).

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<sup>2</sup> In his essay “Sinemada 12 Eylül: Bellek yitimine direnmek ve temsil stratejileri”, Doğruöz (2007) notices that there are other collective traumas of Turkey, such as “Deportation of Armenians”, “Conscription of Minorities”, “The Events of 6-7 September”, “The Military Coup of 12 March 1971”, “The War in the Southeast of Turkey”.

## **2.2. Psychic Trauma, Political Violence and Mourning in Psychoanalytic Theory**

### **2.2.1. Description of Psychic Trauma**

An external cause to an internal psychic trauma may be the loss of an important person, sexual or aggressive abuse, torture, natural disaster or war. Whether it is a personal or collective experience, it may cause internal suffering, namely the psychic trauma, which is very personal for each subject and also very similar. Trauma may emerge accidentally or from the nature, on the other hand if it originates from human; it is accepted as human-made trauma (Herman, 1992). Even when the origin of trauma seems to be as a natural or accidental one, to disregard the role of human is very difficult in most of traumatic conditions. For instance, after an earth quake people die not only because of the magnitude of it, but also because of the faulty made buildings (Volkan, 2006).

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is only one outcome of psychic trauma. It is a mental disorder and diagnosed by American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) basically as the symptoms of intrusive reexperience of traumatic event, persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with trauma and numbing in general responsiveness, and persistent increased arousal. Also the Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual (PDM), published in 2006, handles psychic trauma and PTSD together under the category of "Anxiety Disorders".

The experience of psychic trauma is summarized in PDM in four basic mental functioning categories of “affective states”, “cognitive patterns”, “somatic states” and “relationship patterns” (PDM, 2006, pp. 102-104):

1. “Affective states” may emerge in adulthood as regression in the experience and handling of affects, over-whelming feeling reactions (rage, terror, and shame), dissociation of affects (emotional numbness, blankness, inability to connect disturbing feelings).

2. “Cognitive patterns” may include distortion in critical ego functions, which consist of reality testing, sense of reality, judgment, affect regulation, defenses and memory process. This may demonstrate itself as sense of betrayal, guilt about actions or having survived, justification of over-whelming anxiety with defensive detachment, inability to think about traumatic events, dissociation in memory (a distorted past is occurring in present), intrusive thoughts about the cause of trauma or punishing the perpetrators, flashbacks and recurrent nightmares (the last two are particularly characterized with post-traumatic stress disorder).

3. “Somatic states” are characterized with irritability, sleep disturbance, substance abuse as a result of the need for self-medication and bodily reactions which are a kind of re-experience of trauma.

4. “Relationship patterns” may change towards experiences of distrust and insecurity, withdrawal, the feeling of aggression and guilt, sadomasochistic modes of interacting which is the re-enactment of traumatic situation.

PDM also points out that the level of damages will change on the prior stability of specific ego functions, the defenses (adaptive/maladaptive, flexible/rigid), the degree of psychological regression, the security of attachment, the level and quality of object relations and the capacity for self soothing.

### **2.2.2. Trauma Studies from Historical Perspective**

Psychic trauma has been one of the most remarkable issues from the beginning of psychoanalysis. The story of current psychic trauma begins with industrialization and urbanization and the diffuse of modernist ideology to the cultural life of the West (Kaplan, 2001). Leys (2000), points that the modern definition of trauma is firstly described by John Erichsen in 1860. Some of the main theorizations who began to speak about psychic trauma are those of J.M. Charcot, Pierre Janet, Alfred Binet, Morton Prince, Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud. The initial strategy of cure stands on the recollection of forgotten, dissociated or repressed memories, while the patients are hypnotized by clinicians. Namely, the aim is to restore memory and remembering of hysteric patients.

In his primary studies Freud's theoretical tendency considers women, who suffer from hysteric symptoms, as victims of childhood sexual abuse. However, this point of view which emphasizes the external reality and repressed sexual traumas is replaced by the theory that of hysteric symptoms emerge from *the return of repressed*, namely the sexual infantile wishes and fantasies. The period after his father's death brought Freud to a

self-analysis via his dreams, fantasies and memories and the oedipal theory (Howell, 2005). This means that fantasy replaces with reality and psychic suffering is not the consequence of the external events.

While Herman (1992) mentions that Freud creates internal reality, namely psychoanalysis, from the trauma of hysteria, she points that psychoanalysis is established on the denial of the external and social reality of the women's trauma. She argues that Freud did not want to disturb the upper class family of Vienna, because he had patients from this class. Nonetheless with the World War I, Kaplan (2005) notes that Freud questioned the differences between "ordinary neurosis and trauma", namely differences between "neurotic repression and traumatic dissociation", the issue which occupies the recent trauma studies (p. 29).

In her book *Trauma: A Genealogy*, Ruth Leys (2000, p.35) discusses psychoanalysis' struggle with psychic trauma and presents the subtle oscillation between "*mimetic*" and "*antimimetic*" theorizations. This oscillation partly begins with the contradiction included in Freud's initial theory and places in the center of trauma studies and discussions. Moreover the question of whether trauma's nature is *mimetic* or *anti-mimetic* refers the dilemmas of external-internal, fantasy-reality, remembering-forgetting, and repression-dissociation. Freud's earlier conceptualization of hysteria is established on the determining role of external reality. Freud believes that the overwhelming past experiences creates adult's hysteric symptoms. This view focuses on the mimetic theory which refers to the autonomy of the subject who is able to watch traumatic event as a spectator while it is

happening. Later Freud's attempts to explain the phenomena of hysteria with the internal reality. This is evaluated by Leys as the turn to *antimimetic* theory which is opposite to the view that the trauma arises only from an external event. The *antimimetic* theory of trauma does not focus on the role of external world but the internal world (the psychic processes related with wishes, fantasies, conflicts or defenses). It accepts that these internal processes determine which experiences are traumatic and how the memory of the event is constituted.

The clinical studies about psychic trauma intensified during the World War I and World War II, due to the traumatic results of these wars (on male veterans). However theorists nullified the view that only women exhibit hysteric symptoms and demonstrated the importance of external reality in psychic trauma (concentration camp syndrome or survivor syndrome) after the emergence of the movement against the war in Vietnam and the feminist movement mental health policies (Leys, 2000; Herman, 1992). As a matter of fact PTSD is classified in DSM III as a disorder of memory from 1980 onwards.

Without doubt, one can admit that studies on psychic trauma always have existed and should be dealt together with external reality and social studies. Thanks to the three important historical and social phenomena, psychic trauma gained attention in academic and social life. These are the republican movement against church by the end of nineteenth century, the anti-war movement against the Vietnam War and the feminist movement against sexual and domestic violence (Herman, 1992). However it should

not be forgotten that while the external causes are similar for each people, the subjective meaning of trauma changes for each person (Howell, 2005).

Kaplan (2005) summarizes what determines the quality of traumatic experience:

One's individual psychic history, on memories inevitably mixed with fantasies of prior catastrophes, and on the particular cultural and political context within which catastrophe takes place, especially how it is "managed" by institutional forces. (p. 1)

### **2.2.3. Memory and Trauma**

Remembering, namely memory, is the issue which has mostly preoccupied the psychoanalytic trauma literature. Additionally forgetting is also significant for the working with trauma. It is true that from the beginning, the psychoanalytic theory and its practice works mainly for linking trauma (the overwhelming event) to the fantasy (the subjective meaning of it) (Kaplan, 2001).

Leys (2000), points that in hypnotic cure after the catharsis, amnesia emerges and therefore the cure fails to narrate dissociative material. Remembrance is the key word here with the result of abreaction. According to her, though the complaints of veterans are seen as malingering by some clinicians after the World Wars, trauma studies turn to Freud's initial theory of dissociation. This is the mimetic theory which points the use of *hypnotic* and *cathartic* cure, *passive victim* damaged by *external reality*. Namely it means that the *blindness* of victim who hypnotically *identifies* or *imitates* the event or the perpetrator and only re-experiences trauma symptomatically, but is not capable of remembering the traumatic event via the ordinary way of memory.

Narrative memory and traumatic memory are separated by Janet, since he describes traumatic memories as only unconscious reenactment, which has no story that one is able to tell but only act (Janet, 1925, in cited Howell, 2005, p.57). Freud defines trauma as unrepresentable, “as a situation of unconscious imitation or identification with traumatic scene” (Leys, 2000, p. 300). On the other hand his statements also include that the traumatic experience emerges from the sexual desires and fantasies of the subject, thus he/she is able to watch himself/herself as performing the scene of trauma in dreaming. Leys emphasizes that because of Freud’s formulation of trauma contains both of the meanings, a dichotomy arises inextricably for later formulations.

Caruth (1996), who works mainly on trauma and memory, suggests that the traumatic experience paradoxically is related with both “the most direct seeing of a violence” and the “absolute inability to know it” (p. 92). She mentions that there are a lot of descriptions of trauma and adds hers:

In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. (p. 11)

On the basis of their neuropsychological studies, van der Kolk et al. (1997) assert that rather than being ordinary, declarative and narrative memories; traumatic event is recorded as non-declarative or implicit. This means that the traumatic event is reminded in mind as a reality imprint, literally recorded without being distorted by subjective meaning. For Leys (2000) the statement that traumatic experience is not recorded through ordinary memory but it is recorded as a reality imprint, is insufficiently out



of evidence. In addition to this, she mentions that it brings ambiguity about the victim's declaration and the moral distinction between victim and perpetrator. According to her, this view, which is also supported by Caruth, eliminates "the question of autobiographical-symbolic meaning", and thus "makes manifest the mechanical-causal basis of much recent theorizing trauma". This is more acceptable for memory politics of our times, also for the "scientific research community" and for "some literary critics" (Leys, 2000, p. 7).

Walker (2004) treats trauma and memory from another point and discusses the issue with a helpful explanation. She claims that although traumatic memory engages with fantasy, the mistaken memories also testify the truth, the experience of survivors.

Trauma characterized by the delay or absence of symbolization and so the sensorial (visual, auditory) experiences which aren't worked properly by the psychic process (Kaplan, 2005). It is repressed or dissociated, which refers the negative (absence of narrative) and performative (acting-outs, bodily symptoms), with Elsaesser's statement, "negative performative" (2001). Against a traumatic experience the subjective world may use both dissociative process and repression.

Considering the new brain studies and psychological explanations, Kaplan suggests that there are three types of responses to trauma: dissociation ("when the event only registers on the amygdale, and does not reach the cortex"), temporary repression (when the event registers in the cortex and its recall is possible) and unconscious fantasies (when the present

situation triggers earlier memories) (2005, p. 88). Considering the last two, here one should mention the Freud's concept of *nachträglichkeit*. It refers the belatedness, the shift of trauma in temporality and space, as a deferred action being able to experience trauma another time, another place. Besides it means the delayed effect of an early traumatic experience and reconstruction the meaning of trauma (Eickhoff, 2006).

Kaplan (2005) appreciates Caruth's statements about the unspeakably and unpresentably nature of trauma, and adds Radstone's commitments of that trauma neither is recorded as a linear event nor is avoided by unconscious. To summarize, if trauma is considered, the memory process may be disturbed by the catastrophes, but there probably exist memories of survivors or witnesses, that are neither fictions nor the pure objective facts, but solely the people's truths. In any time the truth is influenced both by wishes or fantasies and the social codes and discourses (Kaplan, 2005). Although the stories about trauma do not reflect the real fact, she underlines "telling stories" and "emphatic sharing" is the only way of translating and working-through trauma.

#### **2.2.4. Defenses against Traumatic Facts: Dissociation, Repression, Denial, Displacement**

All the defenses may manifest themselves through fantasies. For Winnicott (1975) fantasizing is an effort to deal with inner reality and omnipotent manipulation of external reality. The psychic defenses are both cores of the pathology and the protectors of psyche. Additionally they bring

out the uniqueness of the subject, the wishes, the creative activity of the internal world, the balance between inner and outer world and between fantasy and perception. As the subject is overwhelmed by an experience, this productiveness turns to barrenness and suffering of the internal world.

*Splitting*: It is the main mechanism which divides the experience for reducing anxiety. According to Ferenczi (1949) “There is neither shock nor fright without some splitting of personality” (Howell, 2005, p. 49). Ferenczi describes trauma in terms of self splitting and the parts of psyche. One of the most important function in between the split-off states, is the *care-taker self*, which may become a caretaker for the rest of the parts under the situation of early trauma. He talks about the “*wise baby*” who does not feel pain, helps the child and “*teaches wisdom the entire family*” (Ferenczi, 1949; qtd. in Howell, 2005, p. 79). The traumatic shock may cause in child “a transitory psychosis”, “a turning away from reality”, “the dissociated part, however, lives on hidden” and he/she “splits of himself /herself a part which in the form of a helpful, loving, often motherly.... This angel sees the suffering or murdered child from outside” (Ferenczi, 1930-1931; qtd. in Howell, 2005, pp. 79).

*Repression*: In Freud’s theory, the unconscious part of mental apparatus emerges from the repressive mechanism. Hence it is the crucial mechanism in Freudian theory which underlies all defenses, conscious-unconscious processes, id-ego-superego development and the resolution of oedipal conflict.

Despite that Freud usually prefers to use repression, the concepts of dissociation and repression is used by him interchangeably. As it is remarked formerly, this is related with Freud's discrepancy and dichotomy which grasps not only the history of trauma study, but also the history of psychoanalytic theory. Freud (1915) points that individual pain causes to repress involuntarily the memory of event but it is not lost, only stored in the unconscious, however his explanations also include the unrepresentable nature of trauma. Since the terms are used interchangeably and unclearly some questions arise in literature: whether repression differs from dissociation, denial and disavowal or not, whether it is a conscious or an unconscious process, whether one is able to formulate repressive material verbally or not.

Firstly related with hysteric's hypnoid states, secondly for the topographical model of conscious- preconscious-unconscious, finally for structural model of id-ego-superego, repression becomes the key term of Freud's psychoanalysis.

At this point it will not be wrong to explain that repression experiences firstly transform to declarative knowledge and formulated experiences then rejects from consciousness to unconscious. Additionally suppression is another term, which can be confused with repression, but it refers a voluntary act to extract material out of consciousness.

*Dissociation:* As to Janet, the extreme emotion of traumatic experience does not enable people to assimilate it into already existing mental framework and to link it with the rest of personal history. Namely

traumatic experience causes failure in the *synthesizing* function (Howell, 2005).

*Denial:* According to Freud denial is a sort of repression in which internal world tries to cope with anxiety through accepting and distorting the intellectual information. While repression protects internal world against the unbearable affects, denial defends it against the anxiety-provoking ideas (Layikeli, 2007). Repressed materials are able to access to consciousness by negation from reality, namely by denial, which is related to developing fantasies or distorting the reality. Not only people but also social groups use this mechanism after big catastrophes and narcissistic breakages.

*Displacement:* While the other defenses serve to repress or denial of the event, displacement overcomes the psychic difficulty through “the displacement of the psychical emphasis on to a topic other than the opening one” (Freud, 1905, p. 51).

### **2.2.5. Melancholia**

“*In Mourning and Melancholia*” (1917) and “*Group Psychology and the Analysis of Ego*” (1921) Freud mentions identification as the introjection of the real or emotional loss of loved object, which can be “a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on” (Freud, 1917, p. 243). Whether in the early times of life or the adulthood, traumatic event is experienced with the similar psychic process, as a loss (Herman, 1992).

Freud separates the reactions to the traumatic experience, mourning from melancholia, stating that the latter is a pathological one. In mourning, the ordinary grief reactions to the external world is experienced as worthless or empty (for example because of loosing an important person) whereas in melancholia, one feels as a part of self is lost or damaged. The subject tries to ignore the loss through the “identification of the ego with the abandoned object” (Freud, 1917, p. 249). Thus melancholy becomes the internal control as if the loved object is still possessed and punished because of the disappointment it created. That is to say, ego is splitting into two parts and the second part is “the lost object”, from now on “the shadow of object has fallen upon the ego” (Freud, 1921, p. 109). La Capra (2000) sees mourning as an important form of working-through, on the other hand melancholia and the manic denial as a form of acting-out:

In acting-out, the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription, and it hauntingly returns as the repressed. Mourning involves a different inflection of performativity: a relation to the past that involves recognizing its difference from the present—simultaneously remembering and taking leave of, or actively forgetting, it, thereby allowing for critical judgment and a reinvestment in life [...]. (p. 191)

He also adds that acting-out may be seen as a precondition of working-through problems, especially if the victims are in the case.

#### **2.2.6. Intragenerational and Intergenerational Transmission of the Trauma**

According to Serge Tisseron (2007) if an experience can be symbolized successfully, it is transmitted through the stories, visual images, rituals and so on, however if it is not, the experience becomes as the split stories, mimics or

gestures, which are not explicitly formulated. Before symbolization, our experiences affect us through the sensory-motor ways, then they become the images and finally they turn to verbal formulations. When an unexpected and painful happening occurs, although people try to introject and assimilate it, they may fail to symbolize it. Tisseron mentions the “ghost” who wanders around between generations, namely the traumatic experience without being symbolized (Abraham & Torok, 1978, qtd. in Tisseron, 2007, p. 4) When people who experience trauma are in question, this transmission refers to the shared difficulty to speak about the experience, for the second generation the difficulty turns to name it and for the third generation, there is a further difficulty, because the experience becomes an unthinkable one.

Volkan, who is intensely interested with the social and intergenerational aspects of the traumas, considers that not only the conscious part of the historical traumas but the unconscious part is transmitted from generation to generation. The unconscious part consists of the affects, memories, defenses and fantasies, which try to cope with the trauma. On the other hand, the conscious part includes mental representations which function in “the myths, stories, idealized personalities, etc” (Volkan, 2002, qtd. in Layıkel, 2007, p. 38).

#### **2.2.7. The Psychological Nature of Political Violence**

To determine the military coup’s psychological effects on survivors and the society, the main aim of the political violence and torture should be understood. In her book *Trauma and Recovery*, Herman (1992) mentions

how the strategies of political violence run and shape the experience of victims as below:

- The perpetrator uses psychological and physical control strategies, which consist for example of unexpected anger or torture. The aims are to weaken the victim, disconnect his/her political identity, make believe him/her that the perpetrator is almighty and that resistance is useless.
- To destroy victim's feeling of autonomy, the body functions are controlled and physical needs are prevented, thus he/she becomes dependent to the perpetrator. Sometimes victim resists through rejecting foods.
- The Victim is broken from his/her belongings. The materials (e.g. books, documents, photos) are destroyed or rituals are hindered which have symbolic meanings.
- The victim of political violence may be isolated or enforced to watch the torture directed to his/her relatives. The feelings of alienation, as if being inhuman and losing self identity are very usual for the victims.

Herman (1992) mentions the omnipotent fantasies through which the survivor resists to the mourning process. *The fantasy of revenge* which refers the exchange of roles between victim and perpetrator seem to reduce the feeling of pain; however it results in repetition of the same feelings through inviting traumatic imaginations. The opposite of this is *the fantasy of forgiveness*, which is similarly an effort to gain omnipotence. *The fantasy of compensation* is the most challenging one, because the wish is quite justified, however the obsession about compensation may block the mourning process (Herman, 1992).



### **2.2.8. Collective Experience of Trauma**

Similar to individual's struggles to understand the traumatic event in a cause-effect relationship, narrate it in a meaningful story, remember after all and suffer from the overwhelming affects (whether repressed or dissociated memories); one can view in the social life the tracks of the collective trauma. Howell (2005) posits that we are parts of the interpersonal relationships, a social world, in which we leave our denied and unformulated anxiety as being a part of "cultural unconscious" (p. x). In other words, the social reactions to trauma are related with the collective psyche which represents itself in the collective discourse through the defenses, fantasies and conflicts. Thus the social discourse is shaped by trauma in order to cope with the tension which threatens the collective unity. These elements are best observed through the definition of the collective identity, the politics of the making of memory and the popular culture (Volkan, 1998).

In short, the symptoms of psychic trauma spread over the society and can be observed not only in people's discourse and acts but also in popular, historical and political ones. Indeed the collective traumas speak to us in terms of the collective discourse, just like the individual does. Like the individual trauma, the collective trauma transmits intragenerational (between people within the same generation) and intergenerational (between people successive generations).

At this point, contributions of certain theorists, whose explanations about the structure of psyche, could be useful to explain the collective processes.

Klein (1935) defines persecutory anxiety as *paranoid-schizoid position*, in which the external object (namely a part object as the mother's breast) is both imaginary and actually introjected. In the infant's imaginary world, the external object is divided into two parts: the feeding, loving, good one and the privative, persecutory, bad one. He/she is not able to discriminate the self and the others, so the object exists not only in the external, but also in the internal world. However, through the circle of feeling hunger and feeding, the part-object is gradually integrated as both being good and bad, additionally the infant becomes to be able to separate the self and the object.

Klein (1935) describes a further stage which is called the *depressive position*. Now the object is experienced as a whole and it is introjected as a loved one, however the depressive anxiety emerges because the object is under potential danger. Thus this stage becomes characterized by depressive feelings such as guilt, anxiety about losing the loved objects, awareness of separation and mourning (Ashbach & Schermer, 1987).

According to Klein the archaic *phantasies*, through the symbolism, are displaced and sublimated into the cultural activities (Ashbach & Schermer, 1987). Under the conditions which create anxiety and regression, the part-object state, persecutory phantasies and the paranoid-schizoid position is revived in the processes of social groups. The defensive reactions in the culture may include the thinking process of over idealization (*all good*) of a social identity or of a group leader and the projection of the badness to others (Ashbach & Schermer, 1987). Another reaction may be

denial of the traumatic loss and omnipotence phantasies. Societies should experience the depressive processes for accepting the lost, for mourning, and ultimately repairing themselves.

Winnicott, whose views will be elaborated later, emphasized the importance of the connection with environment, that is to say the mother's role. He mentions the transitional space, which is between the external reality and the inner world and allows both of them to coexist (Ashbach & Schermer, 1987). To him in the course of time the child's transitional space which emerges from the relationship with the mother spreads out the social context, thus the culture functions to cover both the reality and fantasy. Additionally he points that "there is no personal fulfillment without society, and no society apart from the collective growth processes of the individuals that compose it" (Winnicott, 1971, p. 141). That is to say after a collective experience of trauma, the individual and the society try to find a space for repairing themselves.

When a large group of people are exposed to aggression of others, according to Volkan (2006), people deal with it through five psychological phenomena:

A shared;

- 1-sense of shame, humiliation, dehumanization and guilt
- 2-inability to be assertive
- 3-identification with the oppressor
- 4-difficulty or even inability to mourn losses
- 5-transgenerational transmission of trauma (p. 15)

The first item may be explained as feeling "guilty to be survived"; in the second item, to be assertive means to find "a normal channel to act out

aggression”; third is related with the long-lasting oppression which is “internalized as a shared external superego” by the victims; the fourth is defined as the difficulty about the mental representation of traumatic experience through the grief reactions and mourning process, and the fifth item includes the transmission of other four processes between generations (Volkan, 2006, pp. 16-18). If the victimized group is not able to express members’ aggression, it turns inside the group and causes the development of the feeling of helplessness, which is called by Volkan as the “social masochism” (2006, p. 17).

He adds that these processes vary according to the severity of the shared trauma and to the course of traumatic situation. As the trauma “breaks the tissue of a society”, “the mental representation of the historical trauma and how it has been internalized remains in the minds of the members of that society and continues their preoccupation with such representations whenever there is a new event that is difficult to deal with” (Volkan, 2006, p. 24-25).

### **2.2.9. Mourning and Recovery**

Herman (1992) cites that recovery process consists of three periods. During the first period the aim is not recovery, rather to establish the *trust*. Second period’s role is “remembrance and mourning” and third’s is *reconnecting with life*. The reconstruction of the narrative of trauma should not be only verbal but should also include visual imaginations and bodily sensations. For recovery and justice, the community should provide the

sharing of traumatic experience, the acceptance and compensation of the damages of victims.

During the mourning process the society's wishes will change depending on the nature of trauma experience. In individual's mourning process a "linking object" is chosen as a "magical tool" which represents the lost person or thing, thus one can externalize and postpone the work of mourning (Volkan, 2006, p. 35). A "shared linking object" may help society to mourn with different processes, such as for both accepting the reality of loss and creating a hope to regain the losses (p. 35).

The concepts of certain theorists that are used to explain individual experiences help understanding the role of social circumstances. Winnicott's concept of *holding* which means the mother/environment capacity to create the infant a *potential space* for *playing* and appearing the *true self*, at the same time may refer to the capacity of social context regarding the collective trauma. Through focusing on mother-infant relationship, Bion formulates the non-pathological function of the process. While the infant needs to project the anxiety which is intolerable, if the mother is able to identify with and tolerate this anxiety, she plays the role of the "containing" (Brunet & Casoni, 2000). Thus the infant can reintegrate the expelled part of his/her personality in a tolerable form, namely he/she can simultaneously identify with the maternal capacity for reparation. The metaphor of the "container" and the "contained" is based on the function of the mother who contains, modifies infant's projection, namely to neutralize and to metabolize the destructive content of it (Meissner 1980). Another theorist,

Kohut, deals with the functions of *mirroring* (as the ability of mother to reflect not only the behavior but also the internal states of the infant) and *idealization* (as the ability of the mother to support infant's grandiose/omnipotent self) in which she is assigned as the *selfobject* (Ashbach & Schermer, 1987).

Whether through the concept of Winnicott's *holding* or the others, such as Bion's *containment* or Kohut's *mirroring*, the social environment has an important function in collective traumas. This may include enabling the culture, politics and psychical environment not only to speak, to represent symbolically and to mourn of trauma, but to judge the perpetrators.

Paker (2007) cites that confrontation is a process not only the perpetrators are dealt with, but is also to honor the rebels against and survivors of the atrocity. What he points out is the cultural art products (e.g. movies, novels) should depict survivors' stories, in which the eyes of people turn to them, therefore connect and identify themselves with the resisters of injustice.

If the wound can be revealed in the cultural space, then the "pain may be worked through in the process of it being translated via art", thus it may be healed (Kaplan, 2005, p. 19). Radstone (2001a) mentions the need for seeking the "grey zones" and emphasizes that the testimonial witnessing should include both the emphatic identification with survivors and knowing the story of perpetrators (p. 66). Overcoming of trauma may accrue through the process of narrating (telling and listening) the story which is broken.

## **2.3. Psyche, Symbolization and Artistic Experience**

### **2.3.1. The Internal World and the Process of Symbolization**

After the subject's birth, a distance emerges between her/his needs and the reality of outside. This distance gets bigger since her/his needs are not gratified instantly, which was only possible in the uterus of mother. Thus the new born baby progressively discriminates the interpersonal reality, but is not able to do this just like an adult. Each experience is both traumatic and also an opportunity to grow up, to learning and develop the "subjective psychic reality" in which the ambivalent feelings can be negotiated (Stern, 1988, p. 506).

Some of the elements, necessary for maturation are ready at birth and some are genetically transmitted. However one of the most important parts will be provided by the external world, which covers all possible experiences. The inevitable absence of gratification bears the need for an imaginative gratification, an internal representation of the external experience. Shortly after, the presence of real gratification which is early enough to prevent despondency keeps alive the internal activity. The absence, the internal activity and the relation with the real caretaker which determines the imaginative care taker, constitutes the symbolic world, the language, the internal representations of self and objects, the essential structures of affects and defenses; that is to say subject's internal world and the scenario which he/she expects to live. In the early phases of human life, the external world consists of the key caretaker person and the interpersonal relationship with her/him.

According to Segal (1957) *symbolization* is the act of “bringing together” or “integrating” which includes naming of the objects and experience, especially of the mother and experiences with her. She (1991) defines the symbolic activity of mental life, which becomes more complex with maturation, as the interplay between phantasy and reality.

Segal (1991) mentions the necessary role of the *reality testing* on the changeover from *paranoid-schizoid* to *depressive position*, which means to tolerate the discrepancy between ideal and persecutory expectations about mother and encounter not the good or bad but the real, whole mother. Thus the fantasy and reality, self and object differentiate further. This is the course of the more primitive defenses (such as *idealization*, *splitting*, *projection*) begin to replace not only with the *repression* of fantasies but also sublimation of them. The role of symbolic activity is to restore and recreate the significant other, the mother, namely the object. The symbol is not the equal with or a copy of the object, indeed a new one (Segal, 1991).

Symbolization, use of language and play are the activities of the psyche indicating that it is living. According to Winnicott there is not a baby, who is gratified, there is the nursing (mother-infant couple), which presents a potential space to the inner self, the creative interaction with the environment and actual interpersonal relations. The first differentiating experience starts with the delay of mother. If the delay is not as excessive as intolerable, the baby creates a potential space in his/her inner world, thus he/she is able to be “alone in the presence of someone” (Winnicott, 1971, p. 47). The oscillation between missing of mother and reunion with her,



establishes the baby's capacity to use a symbol union. Thus he/she allows the separation, because separation becomes a part of union. If the mother is *good enough*, the capacity of infant improves and the mother acts less and less appropriate to his/her needs. Consequently the infant deals with this failure through "growing", "beginnings of mental activity", "auto-erotic satisfactions" and "integrating past, present and future" (i.e. "remembering, reliving, fantasizing") (Winnicott, 1971, p. 10). As the symbolic world emerges the fantasy and fact, the inner objects and external objects are already distinguished.

According to Winnicott (1971) there are always the wishes and fantasies between the object and subject. The subject oscillates from inner reality to external reality, whenever the needs catch the control. Playing, which underlies the cultural experience, is neither inner nor external; but it is experienced in a transitional space, the third space. He mentions the paradox about the transitional object, which both belongs to infant as his/her own body part just like the breast and is the "not-me", such as a bit of sucked cloth or the voices of mother (Winnicott, 1971, p. 1). First using of the objects of *not-me* is the infant's first *using of a symbol*, namely the initial version of *playing*. Coping with mother's absence and the process of separating continue with fantasies, dreams and plays.

The paradox is unsolvable, but should be tolerated. The function of transitional space is to separate the inner and external reality, but also to connect them in a way. The infant's "illusion", which arises from his/her inability to percept external reality and which decreases gradually, lasts in

the individual life and expands within the whole cultural space, i.e. the experiences of religion and art (Winnicott, 1971, p. 3). Thus, firstly in infancy and later in individual life, the illusion is permitted.

Then, what kind of characteristics will represent a transitional object? Winnicott (1971) points out that because the child has the right to make the object whatever he/she wants; the transitional object should tolerate the anger as well as fondness. Despite it is not alive; sometimes it seems as if it is. Since the baby has a transitional object, the external object should be alive and good enough; otherwise the internal object fades out slowly. The longstanding absence of mother causes trauma which is experienced by the infant as a break in life's continuity and the primitive defenses are used against the *unthinkable anxiety* (Winnicott, 1971).

Instead of sublimation, he prefers to explain cultural experience with the external reality and the way of subject's object-use, namely his/her object relations. In short, according to Winnicott, the initial experiences of the baby with his/her environment are the bases of symbolization, playing and finally the cultural experience respectively that are placed between external and internal world in a *potential space*.

Fonagy (1996) integrates the concepts of Winnicott's *containment* and Bion's *metabolization* within the concept of *reflective function* (Grandy & Tuber, 2009). The reflective function is the parents' capacity to contain the aggressive and negative feelings which are projected by the infant and their ability firstly to metabolize the negative and then to reflect it to the infant as a manageable one (Grandy & Tuber, 2009). This process opens to

the infant the ability of *mentalization* which means thinking not only about his/her own but also the other people's mental processes. The potential space where the symbolization develops, namely where the meaning about self and others is created, develops in a dyadic context (Grandy & Tuber, 2009).

Facing with traumatic experience, suffering and overwhelming from it, mourning for the absence and working-through with it in terms of symbolic act and play have accompanied us since the very early times. Tisseron (2007) enounces that without a listener, namely a third between us and the experience, we fail to assimilate. A traumatic fact is “too horrible to be remembered, to be integrated with our symbolic universe” (Zizek 1991, qtd. in Belau, 2002, p. xvi). In collective traumas, because the general tendency of culture and politics is not to narrate but to ignore, symbolization becomes more difficult.

### **2.3.2. Dream, Day-Dream, Play and Artistic Experience**

In his essay *Creative Writers and Day Dreaming*, Freud (1908/1990) discusses that every child plays like a “creative writer” and he/she works seriously (p. 131). Although play makes intense affects, the child is able to successfully distinguish what is real or not. He/she only enjoys using his/her imagined objects and the visible material of real life together. They are linked with “tangible objects”, which are “capable of representation” (p. 132). In literary definition they may be the “pleasure

play” or the “tragedy”, namely “mourning play” (p. 132). The artistic work may include the issues of recent experience as well as old experiences.

In child’s play there is an attempt to grow up immediately, since he/she repeat individuals *mimetically*. While the childishness and playing make the individual feel unquiet, the child is not ashamed. The adult supposes that no one has these phantasies<sup>3</sup>, thus he/she hides them. However thanks to the artistic expressions and psychoanalysis phantasies become visible. Not only the embarrassing feelings and pleasuring phantasies but all of the overwhelming, negative feelings tend to be hidden (Freud, 1908/1990).

For Freud (1908/1990) seeking for pleasure does not disappear in adulthood; it just exchanges with the phantasies of “daydreams”, i.e. the new invisible ways of playing (p. 133). The repressed, unconscious phantasies are connected with the pathology but also with creativity. The imaginative writer is “the dreamer in broad day light” because there is not any difference between dream and phantasy. Both of them serve to wish-fulfillment. The dream occurs during sleeping and allows what have been repressed and pushed into unconscious (ashamed wishes) “to come to expression in a very distorted form” (p. 136-37). Actually dreams allow us

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<sup>3</sup> Freud (1908/1990) used the term of *phantasy* not *fantasy* in his *Creative Writers and Day Dreaming*. Freud’s notion of phantasy is a late phenomenon in mental life and begins with children’s play; additionally it is pretty close to daydream or conscious fantasy. Pre-visual, pre-verbal and psychosomatic early experiences are the memories without fantasies. Unlike Freud, Klein assumes that phantasies exist from the beginning of life (Segal, 1991). According to her there is an ego to experience anxiety before the logical thought and it organizes the relations with object through the early experiences.

to close our repressed part but hear its voices through a new symbolic language, and experience it as a *reshaped* form.

Freud (1908/1990) states that the daydreams are not stereotyped and unalterable; on the contrary they bear the stamp of subject's experience and change according to "the memory of an earlier experience" in which the major wishes was fulfilled (p. 135). However these imaginative activities emerge from fresh and active impressions. The relation of a phantasy to time is generally very important.

As to Freud (1908/1990), both for viewer and creator, the source of *pleasure* emerges from the imaginative world:

The motive forces of phantasies are unsatisfied wishes, and every single phantasy is the fulfillment of a wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality. [...] They are ambitious wishes, which serve to elevate the subject's personality; or they are erotic ones. (p. 134)

Freud (1908/1990) asserts that despite the possibilities and infinities of phantasy, the main character of every dream and every story is "his majesty the Ego". He adds:

The author sits inside his mind as it were, and looks at the other characters from outside. The psychological novel in general no doubt owes its special nature to the inclination of the modern writer to split up his ego, by self-observation, into many part-egos, and, in consequence, to personify the conflicting currents of his own mental life in several heroes. [...] In these, the person who is introduced as the hero plays only a very small active part; he sees the actions and sufferings of other people pass before him like spectator. (p. 138)

As the reader or the viewer identifies with the main character, just like the writer, other characters are the inner objects. The happenings are the way of fulfilling the wishes of ego. The writer gives us an aesthetic pleasure as he/she presents us the irritating phantasies with the play. According to him:

[...] all the aesthetic pleasure which a creative writer affords us has the character of a fore-pleasure of this kind, and our actual enjoyment of an imaginative work proceeds from a liberation of tensions in our minds. (p. 141)

Segal (1991) objects to Freud and states that all human activities such as day-dreaming, dreaming, play and art have the same aim of wish-fulfillment; however they become different in terms of other aspects. She keeps apart the *day-dreamer* who “avoids conflict by a phantasy of omnipotent wish-fulfillment and a denial of external and psychic realities” from the *artist* who “seeks to locate his conflict and resolve it in creation” and “does not look for easy solutions” (p. 82).

Because *art* and *play* attempt to translate phantasy into reality, they differ from *dream* and *day-dream*. “Play is a way both of exploring reality and of mastering it and “is also learning to distinguish between the symbolic and the real” (Segal, 1991, p. 101). On the other hand dreaming and day-dreaming doesn’t involve completely similar processes. Day-dreaming is “a masturbatory state of mind” and differentiates from dreaming by ignoring internal reality (p. 104). Like dreaming, playing is a way of working through an unconscious phantasy, a conflict, however, unlike dream, play is in relation to reality.

Segal points that play is an important step in socialization, namely “two cannot dream together, but two or more can play together” (p. 103). She uses the concept of “imagination” which underlies the art and play and is a more complex process than day-dreaming. It refers to one’s own perception of external reality and of the others, and also to the relation

between them. In other words it requires abandoning omnipotence and facing the depressive position.

Segal (1991) relates this attempt to the depressive position which is defined by Klein, through suggesting that artistic creation aims to recreate the internal experiences as a whole in a new world for not only the artist but the reader, listener or viewer. In Klein, psychic structure is described by the defense mechanisms of splitting, projective identification, idealization and manic denial. These are generated against the threats caused by the feelings of hatred and aggression. Reparation is related with infant's *depressive stage* and addresses the ego activity for restoring a loved object wounded by the aggressive feelings. In a sense the subject's depressive anxiety and feelings of guilt are the wish to restore the good object. From the Kleinian perspective, depressive feelings and the inner needs for repairing and restoration of the damaged internal object underlie respectively the symbolic processes, the creative and artistic activities (Hymer, 1983). Recreating the "wholeness and perfection of the damaged internal object", the fantasies of repairing overcome the anxiety and guilty, reestablishing the sense of security (Lutzky, 1989, p. 449).

When the recipient experiences the artistic work, he/she not only identifies with creator, but he/she looks for the feeling of completion, tries to find the harmonious internal world which is experienced as damaged (Segal, 1991). This is the psychic work in which the dream is to recreate the lost world, although the search will be never terminated.

Lutzky (1989) specified that as to Kleinian view the need for reparation and restore of what has been destroyed underlies the activities of child's play, artistic creation and the psychoanalysis. Considering the views of Klein (1940; 1952), Riviere (1936), Winnicott (1948) and Segal (1973), Lutzky mentions three ways of ineffective reparation which are identified in literature: "defective, failed and false" (1989, p. 454). Ignoring the loss and without feeling the guilt, the *defective* attempts try to control and repair the object through the manic and repetitive efforts. The *failure* in reparation may emerge, when even the reparation is experienced as an aggressive act or the damage is felt as incurable. Thus the feeling of despair dominates and the anxiety blocks the reparative activity. *False* reparation emerges when the child has to deal with his/her mother's guilt and depression before to deal with his/her own. This causes that he/she lacks the important ability of being responsible for his/her aggression, that is to say the depressive feelings which are required for repairing disappear.

It is very useful to cite the essays of de Berg about the use of psychoanalysis in literature. While we read a poem, most of the time we re-experience the effects which are formerly experienced and repressed (De Berg, 2003). In a sense the act of reading creates a kind of conflicts between wish and repression, namely between the wish to express and the effort to censor. As to de Berg, the reader (or listener or viewer) deals with art product's ability to contain the conflict and this ability determines its artistic value. In short, the degree it opens a space to the conscious and unconscious



conflicts of receiver and provides to him/her the opportunity to reenact the conflicts is a criterion for psychological evaluation.

As to Freud working-through is “a process in which an obsessively recurring experience is eventually overcome” (Höhn, 1997, qtd. in de Berg, 2003, p. 95). De Berg (2003) affirms that the writers may try to deal and work through his/her own trauma by way of the work of art. He posits that through the plot of the text (also the text of film) the author both express an emotion and make a symptom of resistance for not feeling it. This is also valid for the reader (or viewer) in terms of his/her framework. While the plot takes the reader in its narrative, it prevents the reader to directly identify with the characters:

It involves him in the story and turns him into a participant, but the lack of knowledge and the uncertainty it expresses objectify the events again and turn him into a spectator. (de Berg, 2003, pp. 94-95)

Fairy tales for the viewer functions as coping with the difficulties of growth (Bettelheim, 1976). They have not a single unconscious message, they have many, and thus they speak to various people from different ages. De Berg (2003) defines fairy tales as “the result of centuries of story telling” which do not belong to a particular writer or a group; hence it is impossible to evaluate its creator (p. 96). However because they are collectively created, they tell us something about the society’s childhood conflicts and wishes, just like mythological and religious stories.

According to de Berg (2003), via offering symbolic representations of deepest wishes and fears, fairy tales give children the opportunity “to externalize their inner conflicts and enact possible solutions” (p. 97). While

they are good and romantic stories on a conscious level, they speak to the budding ego of child who does not have sufficient distance from his/her emotions and encourage its development (de Berg, 2003). The fantastic nature of fairy tales make possible for the child to circumvent external threat and protect the caretakers from his/her own aggressive fantasies by making all the threats come true and are eliminate them in the frame of story. In other words through *holding* the wishes and conflicts the stories constitute a *transitional space* between his/her inner world and the external world. De Berg (2003) argues because some stories function properly they are able to come today through being transferred.

The fairy tales do not tell that there is not any badness in the world; however they make the badness something being symbolized and spoken. While dominant social life struggles to obscure for children the dark sides, the monsters of the world which already present in their inner world, the fairy tales help to symbolize their inner conflicts with the plurality of the story (Bettelheim, 1991). However they do not only serve as representation of the conflicts but also function as an affect-regulatory (Grandy & Tuber, 2009). The plurality of story is the opposite of evaluating reality as all sunny or all bad. In a sense the process of psychoanalysis struggles for the fusion of the good and bad parts. During the child plays, his/her unconscious literally express itself, namely the imagination of child is stimulated by the play, thus the fantasies (also the wishes and needs) are connected to the material of play his/her own way (de Berge, 2003). “Safe stories” ignore

the monster who “the child feels or fears himself to be” and deny the “important way of mastering their primitive urges” (de Berg, 2003, p. 100).

Bettelheim compares (1991) child’s routine play with the listening act of fairy tales. While playing alone is the reenact of the child’s inner conflicts or needs which does not include imagining possible ways, the story offers the child possible resolutions for inner conflicts with its indirect nature without being moralistic.

Movies also provide a playing space in which one is not alone, but together with another imaginative world. This world consists of the meeting of cultural significations, the symbolic world of creator and the inner reality of viewer. Kaplan (1990) discusses the similarities and differences of psychoanalytic situation, reading and cinematic experiences. In both of them there exists a transferential situation in which the listener is grasped by the questions not only what is said, but also what the discourse intends or desires and how it tries to work on him. On the other hand she adds that in contrast to reader-text relationship, “where the dialogue is internal and carried on by the critic alone”, in the psychoanalytic situation “the speaking and listening has an intensity and immediateness” and “there is (an) actual rather than metaphorical dialogue” (p. 14). Respecting cinematic experience, while a narration voice creates distance between reader and text, “in film, the spectator readily loses him or herself in the text as a result of classical cinema’s suturing techniques” (Kaplan, 2009, p. 10).

#### **2.4. The Cultural Products as a Subject of a Psychoanalytic Study**

From the beginning, Freud's struggle of understanding the individual co-exists with the curiosity of understanding the society. According to him the main purpose of human being is to impress and master the force of nature, namely to have its materials (Babaoğlu, 1999). The moral values and ideals of society, the artistic works create a narcissistic satisfaction, especially religions are defenses against the destiny and painful experiences of humans. In a sense, the social or cultural products fulfill the needs (or wishes, fantasies) of both the individual and society. That is to say an artistic material reflects both artist's own wishes or conflicts and the socially shared values. Freud posits that the social process or products are realized through the experience of humans (Babaoğlu, 1999). For instance myths are "distorted vestiges of the wishful phantasies of whole nations, *the secular* dreams of youthful humanity" (Freud, 1908/1990, p. 140).

Kaplan (1990) categorizes three separate conceptions of psychoanalysis: "psychoanalysis as a science", "psychoanalysis as a medical practice or talking cure" and "psychoanalysis as a tool for analyzing literature and anthropological text". The last type of usage of this method is called "applied psychoanalysis" (Trosman, 1996). These kinds of studies based on materials found in books, films or other kind of artworks analyze the text or creation using analytic theories and concepts. Although this kind of material cannot speak or provide mutual direct experience, lacks the discursive interaction, there is also an opportunity to understand it via its effect on the observer. Today's increasing emphasis of countertransference

adds new dimensions to our understanding of a creative material (Trosman, 1996).

Psychoanalytic criticism had dealt with the material of literary texts, visual or auditory arts through interpreting them as the creation of artist's inner world or explaining its effects on the listener, viewer or reader, namely the recipient. This is applicable for all of the art products. That's why in this chapter the psychoanalytic approach to literary text will be explained while other art products, especially cinema are also dealt with. In films there are also visual images and voices which enrich the meaning of the scenario but limit the imagination.

Cinema is one of the most popular arts of the last century. The films consist of both the literary, visual and auditory materials which speak to us through affective and verbal ways. Like the child's fairy tale, a film may point out the uncanny and create a tension, while it symbolizes the negative material in the frame of story. That is to say it contains and locks up the negative for the adult. The contents and the discourse of the creation (may be a literary text or a film) with the viewer's inner world and subjectivity originate the artistic experience.

As in other esthetic critics, recent film analysis dealt with the film text as a signifying system which creates the meaning and with the viewer is a subject whose experience is shaped both by the act of watching the film and the given cultural history (Kaplan, 1990). A film or a narrative can be analyzed through *four* models from a psychoanalytical perspective, in all of them it is tried to form a semiological system. These models agree that the

text includes the individual and shared values which refer to the conscious and unconscious wishes or conflicts (Villela, 1999).

First it can be dealt as multiple case histories, in which the characters are analyzed as if they are real patients (Skura, 1981; Villela, 1999). Although this is the most preferred model in psychoanalytic film criticism, because it is impossible to reach the patient's *free association* and the interpretation consists of only analyst's own associations, it is charged with to develop "a master/slave relationship" (Felman, 1977; Brooks, 1986, qtd. in Villela, 1999, p. 316).

In a second method the narrative is interpreted as a fantasy, dream or symptom (Skura, 1981; Villela, 1999). The whole narrative and its form are struggled as the psychic material; thereby the processes of representation and symbolization are the main issues.

The third approach can be to analyze a film or a narrative as a collective story, namely as a myth or a metaphor which is shared by the society (Villela, 1999).

The last method is to touch the text in the form of the transference relationship, in which the reader or viewer plays the role of analysand and analyst (Skura, 1981; Villela, 1999; Brooks, 1994). This model is a more complex one. It is based on the idea how the analyst is grasped by the desire of the patient; the reader/viewer is also grasped by the text. Additionally it assumes that not only the textual materials but the reader/viewer's own fantasies become the issue. While the recipient encounters the film, while he/she is grasped by the film, her/his own psychic material is also activated.

This model assumes that like in the transferential situation, the recipient tries to master and to interpret the artistic experience when he/she encounters an artistic product (Brooks, 1994). Thus he/she continuously oscillates between the role of analyst and analysand. That's to say, the experience of watching a film (also in the other artistic experience) or analyzing the film should be always considered on three dimensions: the desire of film, the desire of viewer and the effort of viewer to interpret his/her experience.

The history of psychoanalysis and cinema begun with modernism, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and both of them were affected by the same social and cultural context. With the 1970s, psychoanalytic explanations about cinema-viewer relationship were very dominant in screen studies, since then different approaches were suggested and debates have continued (Creed, 1998). In general psychoanalytic approaches to film studies are criticized because they see a monolithic (usually man) and ideal viewer rather than the actual one. Further more it is seen that psychoanalytic theory is established on the grand narratives (such as Oedipus complex) and ignores history, society and the ideology which already exists in the culture (Creed, 1998; Durmaz, 1999). Using psychoanalysis in film critics bears the risk to ignore the cultural and political issues (Johnstan, 1990).

## **2.5. Trauma and Cinema**

According to Kaplan (2001) the central dialectic and conflict of modernism is the will both to ignore traumatic events and to talk about it

incessantly. The abstract art which emerged after Holocaust may be treated as the acting out, as the medium of remembering and the effort of working-through of the traumatic history (Rapaport, 2002). Similarly the independent cinematic techniques bear the aspects of trauma: irregular sequences which prevent to create a narrative, the repeated and meaningless images, and the uncertainty of where the story begins and ends (Kaplan, 2001). This means the narration without narrativity, the absence of story. However without ignoring the difficulty to represent the “narrative” and the “image” of trauma, one should not submit that traumatic experience is “something untouchable and unreachable” (Kaplan & Wang, 2004, p. 8). Collective traumas usually necessitate a time span and can be spoken about *belatedly*. If trauma is considered as consisting of two stages, the first one will be to experience trauma when it occurs and the second will be trying to feel overwhelming affects which mean the psychic effort to master the traumatic experience for regaining the wholeness (Bainbridge, 2004).

It is obvious that 20<sup>th</sup> century engages traumas not only because of the big catastrophes but the effect of media which causes people experience traumatic events even if they have not experienced. From 1980’s to present trauma studies increasingly become popular in humanities and recent studies is featured by a “faddish” interest in trauma or a collapsing of everything in trauma (Kaplan, 2005, p. 25). The debates oscillate between to references on internal and external aspects of trauma. In 1990’s they were mainly established on the dissociative aspects of traumatic experience (Kaplan & Wang, 2004). As mentioned previously, dissociation refers to flashbacks,



dreams, breakdown in symbolic function of psyche and bodily memories which may be the only way the traumatic memory is able to arise. There is no place to express the trauma via internal processes, such as fantasies and no way to working-through or historical change, because the symbolization and representation is impossible (Kaplan & Wang, 2004).

If the acting-out refers to that subject is dominated by the repressed past and melancholy, the working-through is to give a historical meaning to the traumatic fact and to integrate the splitting parts of the experience. Besides the legal justice has a significant role, to dealt trauma in a cultural sphere enables new symbolic expressions. This is important for re-institution of society and re-asserting the non-traumatic relations between individual and public life (Kaplan & Wang, 2004).

Considering the social and political issues, popular culture is also related with the efforts of remembering and constituting the memory of a social collectivity. In modern society movies are used in a sense as a medium for historical document and they are used to replace the written history (Ferro, 1993). However cinema is not only a reflection of the cultural structure and historical context, but also a sphere for struggle and critical intervention (Suner, 2006). According to Ferro (1995), movies may constitute the informal counter history in contrast to the official one, thus they balance the construction process of memory. Collective memory is a political arena in modern society and popular culture constitutes an important source to control the memory of nation state (Igartua & Paez, 1997).

Elsaesser (2002) points that memory has an important effect on our identity and argues that visual image determines our perception of reality and history and places in the battle of identity politics. While it represents traumatic stories and images of the past, it offers us to place our collective self within the frame of these images and stories by bearing witness and giving testimony, creating pockets of meaning. Elsaesser suggests that contemporary media (television, cinema) both exploits and exposes traumatic events, causes rupture but also can contribute to healing, while it builds and maintains our cultural/collective memory. That is to say, the visual media not only reflects trauma, but it reconstitutes the reality.

Instead of asking what the film is, Kaplan (2004) questions how it is marked by the viewer and suggests four different cinematic strategies for trauma films. First is the *cure* strategy, which refers to mainstream melodramas that posit trauma as a discrete -but representable and curable- past event. *Melodrama* or *Comedy* is a symptom of culture's need to *forget* traumatic events. Considering the trauma debates, Kaplan and Wang (2004) make an important comment about cultural discourse of trauma:

[...] as a reaction-formation, trauma discourse (especially in the popular media) may degenerate into a signature for victimhood, or an unresolved melancholia mired in injured narcissism or national pride, a melodramatic scenario for self-aggrandizement, a paralysis of the mind and the body, and a failure in language, image, and narrative (p. 15).

Kaplan (2004) points that although it is trying to forget, it also exhibits what needs to be forgotten. Therefore to read carefully narratives and imagery like symptoms give us traces about the latent system of dealing with trauma.

She describes a second kind of strategy called *shock* viewers which causes to being vicariously traumatized and a potentially negative result. The viewer is affected negatively from the images, instead of learning through them. The concept of “mediatized trauma” should be noted which means peoples’ vicarious traumatizations through the secondary sources, namely witnessing and experiencing trauma by visual media (Kaplan, 2005). Encountering to traumatic fact vicariously may be helpful for confrontation process; however it may be dangerous for further witnessing through increase anxiety and the use of defenses against.

Another type of strategy is to put viewer in a *voyeuristic* position with the images of catastrophes such as death people, crashes, etc. Kaplan (2004) views this third one as dangerous because it exploits the victim, offers a subversive pleasure in horror and makes people to fear instead of encouraging. The voyeuristic films expose the viewer the very moment of traumatic experience and try to construct pleasure on sadistic and masochistic process (Bainbridge, 2004).

The last position is being a *witness* which is according to Kaplan the most politically useful position. Because it provides keeping a cognitive distance and awareness, it does not trigger vicarious traumatization. The victim faces the catastrophe, but the viewer becomes in a communication which bears the possibility to “reassert continuity and humanity” (Laub & Lifton, 1995, qtd. in Kaplan & Wang, 2004, p. 10).

Although one of above strategies is dominant in a film, it is possible that some scenes in the film may also bear the other strategies. Kaplan's analysis of films which are dealt with trauma, purposes "to foreground the viewer as active, as having agency and as receiving multiple positions with which to identify" (2005, p. 70).

Trauma film's form and techniques, such as using hand-held camera, form the viewer's experience and affects. While the viewer "struggles to cope with the impact of trauma", the meaning is constructed through not only the text and the narrative, but also his/her conscious and unconscious processes (Bainbridge, 2004, p. 393). Kaplan (2005) mentions the visuality and sounds of trauma films as the "affect aesthetic" through which the viewer is able to feel the traumatic symptoms of victims subjectively (pp. 76-77). However the text, the story of films present the more symbolized and narrated form of the trauma (Kaplan, 1990). Its capacity for providing a potential space to the viewer is crucial for mastering the unpleasurable trauma and feeling pleasure because of tolerating the traumatic affect (Bainbridge, 2004). In contrast to watching a documentary film that encourages the viewer to judge the reality with its narrative and aesthetic; the voyeuristic type of looking leaves the viewer in a passive position with shocking moments and makes escaping from the trauma impossible (Bainbridge, 2004).

As mentioned previously, melancholia and mourning have a close relationship. In this sense film melodramas are treated as a kind of attempt

to mourn and work through the individual or collective wishes, conflicts, losses and traumas. Thus discussing on the concepts of trauma, melodrama and nostalgia are important. Besides melodramas, the films out of this genre yet including the melodramatic themes and have similar impacts on the spectator should also be a part of this discussion. (Doğruöz, 2007).

Film melodramas are very popular and effective. They also give us clues about what people are ready to know consciously in a specific culture (Gunning, 1986, cited in Kaplan, 2005). As traumas became a hot topic in 1970's and 1980's, the melodrama films began touching on cultural traumas as well as the individual ones. They open a safety space both for the need of remembering and forgetting, which may be preferred individually and collectively (Kaplan, 2001).

Considering the individual trauma, early melodramas usually deal with “the space between the history and unconscious” which trauma theories struggle to understand from the very beginning (Kaplan, 2001, p. 202). They basically focus on the family (the hidden, private sphere), which is ruled by male power. Kaplan (2001) claims that early Hollywood melodramas endlessly repeat the individual or collective traumas and confront the viewer with them, but they cure people at the film's end. Along the 1970's and 1980's they deal with the female trauma, but not the racial trauma yet. Kaplan says, this may be considered as an example for two faces of melodrama; the need for remembering and the symptom of traumatic forgetting or cultural amnesia. The traumatic symptoms to which film

refers, even the film's textual and visual structures that "affect aesthetic of trauma phenomena" according to Kaplan, may be the symptoms of the culture (p. 76).

Sometimes the film text may deal with a trauma even though not having such an intention. For example, even though a narrative originates from a specific collective trauma, its main focus may be familial or personal distresses (Kaplan, 2005). This is where trauma gets *displaced* with another story, especially when the traumatic fact is tried to be *forgotten* by the society because of political reasons (Kaplan, 2005). Although the film narrative refers the distressful events and the viewers feel it, the main trauma is absent in the story. In fact, this is the displacement of the collective trauma into an easier one for the viewer and the society to confront. These films may be called as *negative performative* by signing trauma without naming it (Randell, 2003).

It makes sense to mention the two displacement types of aggression in the discourse of popular culture: "identification with victimhood which denies its own aggressivity and fantasies of innocent 'goodness' in which aggression has no place" (Craib, 1994, in cited Radstone, 2001a). Against this type of cultural discourse what Radstone (2001a) suggests is one should struggle to announce the *grey zone* which refers "neither the 'pure' victimhood nor 'pure' perpetration" (p. 76).

Suner (2006) deals with the concept of *nostalgia film*. She points that these films reflect the needs to remember and try to narrate subjective

memories without a historical perspective. Weakening the sense of history and allowing to emerge a collective memory are negative and positive aspects of nostalgic films respectively. Mentioning these aspects, Suner considers that nostalgia films mainly intend to make the viewer remember past as a collective childhood period that is bygone and missed. According to her, nostalgia films search the lost childhood innocence which belongs to the past at the present time. Although nostalgia films produce the subjective remembering against the totalitarian discourse of formal history, they freeze the past in a simple before-after and good-bad duality in which the viewer feels him/herself in the past and also being a part of 'the good'. Thus without having a critical perspective, these films encourage the viewers to relax and to forget instead of taking responsibility of past. Whether they attempt to remember and work through the tragic past, or they reflect cultural symptoms of repression and dissociation; melodramas cause the viewer to stay in his/her safe world.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Sources of Materials

When trauma is verbalized and recognized collectively, it becomes a more obvious truth. This study investigates that how an experienced fact is being expressed and how this memory is being worked through. Working through of a trauma means remembering it, giving meaning to it and narrating it. That means, without denying this fact, turning it a material that can be easily assimilated into individual and collective structure through remolding it with the needs and fantasies. This qualitative research acknowledges that movies as cultural products function to work through traumas, thus it aims to analyze a section of the September 12<sup>th</sup> films. The films are used as the material, as the resource of the study.

For these purposes two films, “Babam ve Oğlum” [My Father and My Son] (2005, directed by Çağan Irmak) and *Beynelmilel* [The International] (2006, directed by Sırrı Süreyya Önder) were chosen to analysis. Below qualifications of the films are effective in choosing them:

- They are defined in the category of September 12<sup>th</sup> films<sup>4</sup>
- They are working through September 12<sup>th</sup> with melodramatic elements and a nostalgic approach.

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<sup>4</sup> When we talk about September 12<sup>th</sup> films, we assume that these films had been shot after the coup, they take pre- and/or post- period of the coup as a subject, and deals with the effects and relations of the coup period with the protagonists (Görücü, 2007).



- They are recent films with powerful emotional effects on viewer.<sup>5</sup> The emotional effect they create is significant and determinant to choose them since this study is on mourning, melancholia, working through and reparation.
- They are popular films that meet many people.<sup>6</sup>

Other popular films produced after the year 2000 (Eve Dönüş, Zincirbozan, O... Çocukları, Vizontele Tuuba) are not included in this study taking into consideration the concepts focused here, and for their being not adequate enough in style and thematic structures as these two films are, focusing the historical aspects rather than personal experiences, and avoiding to indicate that the film is about September 12<sup>th</sup> coup.

### **3.2. Materials**

The films “Babam ve Oğlum” [My Father and my Son] (147 min.) and “Beynelmilel” [The International] (105 min.) are used as material to examine.

### **3.3. Procedure**

First of all, it is examined the social and political consequences of the September 12<sup>th</sup> period, how the personal lives, social and cultural

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<sup>5</sup> Feride Çetin (2008) suggests that these two films satisfy the emotional need about September 12<sup>th</sup>, one by making us laugh and the other by making us cry.

<sup>6</sup> Ticket sale of “Babam ve Oğlum” is 3.837.885, of “Beynelmilel” is 479.575 (Karadağ, 2008)

patterns are affected by the period. Then the psychic trauma elaborated in the psychological manner, approaches to the concept of trauma discussed in historical context, and current debates on the concepts related with trauma take their place. Furthermore, it is put forth that how the psyche responds to trauma and copes with it. Since September 12<sup>th</sup> has political aims and affects most part of the society, how the trauma experienced collectively and what the targets of the political violence are also discussed. It is examined how the survivors handle it and how the mourning and recovery processes are shaped.

Taken into consideration that the trauma causes a break in individual, cultural and symbolic world, the issues that how the symbolization process takes place in person, and how it turns into play and cultural activities and aesthetical experiences, what the functions of cultural products and how the interaction of the viewer and producer with aesthetical product have been the object of discussion.

The theoretical study ends with a discussion on, generally, trauma films, and specifically, the films in which melodramatic themes are used – a discussion which, further, focuses on how these products are used as objects of study from within a psychoanalytical perspective. Books and theses on the socio-cultural setting and cinema of post-1980 Turkey, as well as movies on “September 12” are scanned through.

First of all, this study bases itself on the conception that movies are both political-ideological instruments and, from a psychological point of view, possess a subjective reality; namely, the study holds that they contain

an ideological narrative, whether intentionally or unintentionally. In the second part, selected movies have been subjected to a qualitative analysis within the framework of theoretical discussions in psychoanalysis. The analysis is nourished by the approaches of several persons mentioned in the course of the theoretical discussion (Freud, Klein, Winnicott, Segal, De Berg, Kaplan, Radstone, and Suner).

The analysis is built up on four points:

- 1) How the film, as a narrative reflecting collective reality, as a meaning making instrument, narrates (which) traumatic losses.
- 2) What kind of symbolic language it deploys.
- 3) How it stages melancholia, mourning and the struggle for working-through.
- 4) What it promises to the viewer in the journey of the film.

For this purpose the materials of the films, namely the structures of narrative (themes, characters, the development of events), the visual and auditory features were used.

#### **4. The Analysis of “*Babam ve Oğlum*” and “*Beynelmilel*” in Terms of Trauma and Psychoanalytic Explanations**

##### **4.1. Introduction: Cultural Environment and Movies in Turkey after the Military Coup of 1980**

Because the emergence of color film which increases the cost of film production and the expansion of television engendered the instability of demand in film market, Turkish cinema faced with a crisis by the end of 1970s. This crisis deepened in 1980s where the cultural sphere was censored, individuals were under pressure, consumption patterns were changed rapidly and every household had a TV set. After the coup in September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1980, the number of films produced decreased dramatically. If we consider the cinema after 1980 together with the coup of September 12<sup>th</sup> and its traumas, we can observe that the movies after the coup reflected three types of responses or defensive efforts in cultural sphere against the trauma.

The first response is production of frivolous comedies and erotic movies, as a trend of popular cinema in the first half of the 1980s. These movies resemble representing repression and total denial of the presence of the social reality. While the main reason of this denial is political conditions of the day (namely, censorship on cultural sphere and pressure on individuals), in a psychological manner, it is meaningful to mention that

before initiation of working through the trauma one need a time interval. Through these comedies and erotic movies that displaying an omnipotence control and a manic defense, it seems as if the society says “nothing is happened, trauma is not experienced, everything is fine, and there is only joy and pleasure in life”.

A second type of response run in handling traumas manifests itself in the art movies and political movies after 1980. In addition, while they try to compose a full story and tell something coherent, after all the consequent stories are confused, disorganized, and composed of fragmented narrations and abstract expressions of experiences. Of course, this situation is, again, related with the political censorship that prevents free speech. However, it seems that it exhibits post-traumatic experiences such as a confused state, an inability of composing a coherent story, and fragmented expression of the experiences.

Furthermore, we can say that the last response to the trauma is displacement of the social traumas experienced from 1980s to recent days by the films which are part of arabesque culture with its extremely dramatized personal traumas. These films are consisting of extreme stage effect, and provide the viewer a catharsis and emotional discharge in the fetishism of being victim. We can say that they, in this way, help forgetting the real traumas for the sake of the social authority and personal psyche.

Thus, all the films produced after coup bear the stamp of that period; through: either, the feeling of disunity and void because of the force of political pressure and unspoken history, that is, dissociative state; or, an

unreal pleasure that ignores it, that is, state of omnipotence control; or, the state of forgetting the trauma itself by feeling grief for everything except the trauma, that is, the displacement of trauma. Unless confronting the effects of period, the entire cultural sphere is about to bear the enduring stamp of it.

These tendencies in Turkish cinema continued by the mid 1990s and with the 1990s new directors and films have begun to appear. Suner (2010) likens the new Turkish cinema the house “haunted by the *ghosts* of the past”: the ghosts that are *resistant to being forgotten, remind themselves forcefully, come back whenever repressed* [Italics not mine] (p.1). Thus, when the films begin to speak, they also reveal the past *crimes* and *traumas* willingly or unwillingly [Italics not mine]. We can sense it via the uncanny feeling that permeates to us while watching. She mentions that *ghost* in Turkish, *hayalet*, also can be read as “hayal et” –that is, “imagine” or “dream” (Suner, 2006, p. 16). This reading, according to her, refers to a remembrance of the past nostalgically with a romantic feeling of belonging. Suner (2006) puts that there are two kinds of attitudes reveal itself in the popular films after 1990s: “emerging culture of nostalgia” and “social memory loss” (p. 25). The former one is an attitude of “returning to the childhood”, returning to the period of which refers harmony, innocence and vulnerability (Suner, 2010, p. 29). This attitude reveals itself in the movies through two ways again: first, by showing the flashbacks to the childhood experiences of the characters, and second, by narrating the real stories of past events by figurations of childlike immature characters.

While these films with nostalgic elements sometimes deal with past historical or political events, it is not correct to accept these films as “historical films”, because these films reveal the “culture of subjective memory” which is surrounded by the feeling of “nostalgia” (Suner, 2006, p. 50). The dominant aspect in these films is not the feeling of uncanny they conveys, but their half melancholic half joyful stories. These stories of past include “an image of the felicitous sapec of childhood” (Suner, 2010, p. 27). Suner (2006) puts that these films are freezing the past as a childhood dream rather than creating a collective memory. These films put the past “as a period of collective childhood” and present “the remembrance of the past from today’s perspective” (Suner, 2010, p. 26-27). According to her, even though these films aim to make a social criticism over today’s world, they only try to simplify the complex courses of society, that is, its fears, fantasies, and conflicts, in order to assign a meaning to them; and by doing that they show the badness (or bad people) as danger coming from outside. Rather than being critical; the films make the viewer and the society feel that they belong to goodness, and therefore they help the society to avoid undertaking responsibility.

We can say that from the 1980s to the mid of 1990s, Turkish film had experienced a stagnation period. We can do a count of 28 films shot in that stagnation period plus the period of revival after mid 1990s, that touch in a way to the coup of September 12<sup>th</sup> dealing with the period before and/or after it (See Appendix A). We can group these films as; first of all the films that narrates the pre- or post- periods of the coup in a historical manner;

second, that narrates the effects of the period of the coup and changes experienced by society due to the coup; and last, that narrates the troubles of the people harmed by the coup because of their political ideas, and their own facing processes with themselves (Boztepe, 2007; Karadağ, 2008). Önder (2009) offers dividing them into two: the films that the period of September 12<sup>th</sup> coup passes through them, and that narrates the period of September 12<sup>th</sup> coup. He says that the latter ones are very few in numbers, and the coup period in the former category remains as a background color of the stories. The situation of the former category, that is, the remaining of the coup period as background in these films, can be related firstly with the overt political pressure, then with the difficulty in representation of the trauma.

While Murat Belge (1990) evaluates the films produced up to 1990, he puts that these films had not been completed well (cited in Karadağ, 2008). He says that it is hard to create saturated figures of the characters in his mind. In no way, he says, the two elements belong to the period, namely “the period itself” and “the people”, could come together to create a meaningful connection. Our inability to represent the period as a meaningful whole and a coherent story in its historicity, and the fragmentation and loss of integrity of the character structures in stories, make one think that the films reveal the dissociative state of the trauma, and the time interval necessary for creating the symbolic representation of the trauma has not been passed yet. So to speak, it is not known what had been lost in the past, what is missing now, for what to get upset or for what to mourn, it is like it



cannot be verbalized as "something". Rather than a lost object, there is a strange object here.

La Capra (2000) mentions that “absence” and “loss” are two different things. When trauma is taken into consideration, there is an absence and anxiety for this absence. If this absence is given “an identifiably object –the lost object”, then the anxiety may be transformed into fear (La Capra, p. 183). It is the transformation of absence into loss. Lost object is something of which fear, that it creates, can be experienced, and thereby something which can be mourned for. That is, in contradistinction with absence, lack or loss is a thing that is perceivable, definable, enunciable and available for working through. It seems as if these films make the viewer feel the anxiety of an absence rather than expressing a lost thing, and indicate a void rather than a representation.

With the mid 1990s, melodramas with more melancholic and nostalgic elements emerged in place of fragmented stories. The melancholia in these films indicates a story that has a “lost object”. But, rather than a void in narration, now a condensation of defense mechanisms such as repression and denial. At last there is an object for trying to mourn after, however, this time repression comes into action defensively because of the difficulty to cope with the aggression created by loss. This time the story may be in danger of squeezing into a melancholic paralysis.

## **4.2. *Babam ve Oğlum***

### **4.2.1. Credits and Plot**

*Director and Writer:* Çağan Irmak

*Producer:* Şükrü Avşar

*Cast:* Fikret Kuşkan (Sadık), Çetin Tekindor (Hüseyin), Hümeysra (Nuran), Şerif Sezer (Gülbeyaz), Ege Tanman (Deniz), Salim (Yetkin Dikiciler), Hanife (Binnur Kaya), Fatma (Bilge Şen), Aysun (Tuba Büyüküstün)

*Genre:* Drama

*Year of Production and Vision:* 2005

*Identification of Film Characters and Plot:*

We can distinguish two main characters of the film as Sadık and Deniz. So to speak, these two characters represent two sides of the same character, as a child-self and as an adult-self.

*Sadık*, opposing his father's wish, leaves home in order to study journalism rather than agricultural engineering at the university. His father not only chooses what to study but also chooses who to marry on behalf of him. However, besides his family, he also left behind his fiancée. He is an idealist and leftist journalist. Yet, as shown in the beginning of the film and referred again in latter scenes, he always feel the loss and loneliness because of the life left behind him and his resentment against his father. Losing his wife when the coup takes place, his experience of torture and prison life, and finally learning that he is going to die because of his illness take all his excitement and belief in life away from him. He is no longer that excited boy that he used to be, but he is tired. He does not regret for his choices in life, but he has nowhere to leave his son when he dies. That is why he goes

back to his family's farm. He gets mad at his father, yet he wants to be accepted by him.

*Deniz* lost his mother during delivery. His babysitter, *Fatma*, who looks after him in a compassionate and caring way, is like his mother in one sense. There is a maternal intimacy in his relationship with his father. *Deniz* is a child who loves comic books and fairy tales and who has a creative imagination. He often nestles in his day-dreams on every positive or negative occasion that excite him. These day-dreams create a life that helps him to handle the reality of life. Meanwhile, *Deniz* is always afraid of losing his father and of not being loved by his father.

*Hüseyin*, *Sadık*'s father, is an authoritarian and conservative character who wishes his sons to have a live in the way that he desire. It is evident even in the names that he has given to his sons: “*Sadık*” (Loyal) and “*Salim*” (Safe). *Salim*'s, his younger son, having immature personality and mind causes *Hüseyin* to pin his hopes on *Sadık* for the future of their farm and the family matters. However, *Sadık* prefers to leave home and study journalism and to crown it all he takes part in the leftist politics. *Hüseyin* considers this as his authority to be disregarded and his existence to be ignored and he was very angry at *Sadık*. *Hüseyin* is the one who rules the farm, he has the power; he does not show his feelings and tries to look strong.

*Nuran* is *Sadık*'s mother. She is a strong and cheerful woman who can also oppose her husband. She could not do anything when *Sadık* was

leaving home, but at this arrival she will not let him go again and this time she will make her husband take into account her words.

Younger brother *Salim* has a naïve and immature personality. He is really tied to his family, he can never object to his father. In the same way his wife *Hanife* also has a childish personality. Both of them have difficulty in making their children do what they say. The last character that is important to be mentioned is Nuran's widow sister *Gülbeyaz*, who does not talk to Hüseyin because of a family problem about trees.

The film starts on the 11<sup>th</sup> September night. Sadık, the protagonist of the film comes home drunk. His wife Aysun is pregnant, and as the delivery may start one of those days, she warns him not to drink. So her labor pain starts that night; Sadık hastily tries to call a taxi, but nobody answers the phone. They hurriedly go down the street, but there were no cars passing by. Streets were empty, so they start to walk. At last Aysun cannot stand, and the birth starts. Then we see that it is morning and the baby has been born, Aysun has died of the loss of blood, and Sadık was in shock. A soldier getting off a military truck tells us that a coup has taken that night. That is how the film starts. We see the following seven years as a summary as the film music and the generic starts. Sadık is put in prison. We see through short scenes about him naked on the knees and tortured. His friends take care for his son, and a babysitter and a wet nurse is hired for him. The music continues and time passes by. When Sadık is out of prison, Deniz is about one year old. Story continues with short scenes until the year 1987.

The name of Sadık's son is Deniz. Deniz likes fairytales, strip cartoons and his babysitter Fatma. One day, Sadık decides to turn back to his family that living in a small Aegean town. When he arrives to his family home, by flash-backs we see that he had left home by getting involved in a quarrel with his father. When he turns back, everybody except his father welcomes him and his son with revelry. His father's stubbornness softens in time thanks to Deniz, and at least he warms to his grandchild. Yet, he does not talk with Sadık. One night, Sadık comes home drunk and wants to talk to his father. We learn that he wants to leave his son in the family house. Sadık is taken ill that night and admitted to hospital. Doctors say that his lungs suffered considerable damage by torture and prison life. He dies no long after he was hospitalized. The hospital period makes the links within the family become closer and mends the relations of Sadık and his father. His death brings a deep sorrow to the family. Film ends with showing the period that Deniz's and the family's acceptance of this death and their mourning.

#### **4.2.2. Narration of Traumatic Losses**

The first thing we witness is Sadık's terrible loss of his wife, Aysun. It is foreboded that a bad thing is about to happen through that Sadık is drunk when he comes home, and Aysun warns him that she is about to bear a child: "Will you hold the baby in your arms as you are drunk? No way... I won't give it to you! You may fall it on its brain." Then they practice how to

carry a baby –this is a measure of precaution. In spite of all these precautions, the upcoming loss cannot be prevented. The fear occurs when the labor starts at night, the taxi does not answer their call, the neighbors do not answer, and the streets are empty. Afterwards the labor starts, the irregular shots of the camera make us understand how chaotic the situation is. We see the scene darkens after Aysun’s frightening scream. We come across with a morning scene of silence as the scream lowers. We see Aysun’s dead body in blood lying on the ground and Sadık in shock with the baby in his arms. He was so shocked that he could not coherently narrate what has happened to him to a soldier passing by and asking: “What has happened brother?” He answers in a fragmented way in a dissociative state; he only tells the events in sequence: “My wife has died... The baby has been born... There is no taxi... There is no one... Nobody helped...”

The film starts with this traumatic loss. Then we see the other appalling truth through the short scenes shown with music behind. Sadık is put into prison and tortured. We see Sadık as lying on the floor as naked in a dark cell, getting beat up as blindfold, and tied. Torturers are not seen anywhere; there is no speech; we only hear the music. We don’t see the other prisoners who are another part of the prison life. There is only Sadık as the victim. As he goes out of the prison, he has the physical and psychological effects of the difficult events he has experienced. He is no longer the man he was in the past. In the film, only in these few minute scenes, the meaning of the coup and the political violence are mentioned. Social pressure that a leftist man faces and his change after he is out of the

prison is not mentioned; it is shown as if everything happened and ended in prison. Whatever has happened to him, political violence has reached its aim and he has become of a person who has detached himself from his political attachments and social relations, who is afraid of perpetrators (i.e. cops) and who considers struggling for one's thoughts as meaningless.

Another traumatic event that we witness in the flow of the film is Sadık's leaving home despite his father and losing his relations with his family. We see after what kind of a quarrel he left the town through a flashback in a scene when he comes back to the town and meets his father. His father Hüseyin sees the son Deniz, but he does not speak, turns his back and leaves. Hüseyin's turning his back reminds Sadık his experience of his own leaving from there. Sadık remembers his father saying "let him go!" What is actually felt in the film is Hüseyin's turning his back to Sadık's longing to live his own life. That is, in fact his father really left Sadık just like he is turning his back to Deniz and leaving now. Sadık is left alone, without a family, without a father. In this scene, we feel the tension Sadık has in the relation with his father and his ignoring Sadık: Sadık's desire to have his own life and to leave, and also his fear of loneliness.

We see this fear in Deniz's statement. After his father left and the flashback ended, Sadık starts to walk towards the road again in an angry way. Would he abandon his son this time leaving him here just as his father has done? Deniz shouts at his father: "Dad, where are you going?" Sadık

turns back, because his mother will not let him leave this time and he has come here for he has to; he has an important reason to stay.

The last staggering event we see is Sadık's illness and death. We learn about his illness in the scene when he goes on drunk in order to talk and face his father. Sadık speaks to his father; tells him everything and why he has come back and then he slumps down. Irregular shots of camera again make us feel how traumatic the moment is. We learn in the following scenes that he had something wrong with his lungs because of the conditions and what he experienced in prison; the illness has repeated and he will probably die. This hospital period in the film is quite dramatic and narrates farewell and saying goodbye. At last Sadık dies.

#### **4.2.3. The Imaginative World of the Film**

In this section what kind of a symbolic field the film has created through its plot, characters and audio-visual materials is tried to be looked into. Which defense mechanisms, fantasies and themes the film includes is to be examined.

##### **4.2.3.1. Displacement of Traumatic Memory**

When we consider the narrative of the film, the first concept that must be mentioned is displacement as a defense against the shocking reality of trauma. The traumas that the film narrates actually displace and obscure



more severe traumas the effects and meanings of which are more significant and so which are harder to be talked about. In this film, the main trauma that displaces personal and familial traumas is September 12<sup>th</sup> coup and the period after coup. Two significant events in the movie are the ones resulted from September 12<sup>th</sup> coup: Aysun's death and Sadık's death after being tortured and getting ill. However, the coup is mentioned in the movie in a very limited way, even there is denial in most parts. On the contrary to the September 12<sup>th</sup> coup, the major problems of emotional focus are the feelings of loneliness and being an orphan. This state of being an orphan on Sadık's side is lost family bonds and on Deniz's side it is an unseen mother and a father who will be lost.

The viewer can understand the reasons of all; yet the film does not narrate this period clear enough for him/her. For instance the torturers are not shown in the prison and there are no other survivors. It looks as if this only happened to Sadık, not to the whole society. Another thing is that the people who have done this are not cursed, they are just ignored. Although the family learns about Sadık's illness and the reasons of it, they do not get angry with the ones who are responsible for this, but blame themselves for having let Sadık go. Sadık does not say a word about it. Shortly, the film intends to tell the dramatic events caused by September 12<sup>th</sup> coup, but at the same time it denies it as a historical reality. The key point of the film is like to be set on presenting this collective trauma by replacing it with other traumas through which we can feel how terrible it is but we can also accept and talk about it more easily. That is, there is one main trauma, but this is

not completely shown in the movie. Other personal and familial traumas replace it. All other dramatic traumas are like to be obscuring the coup. It seems like it is not possible to tell this drama by mentioning the coup; coup is something that could only be explained through these personal traumas.

#### **4.2.3.2. The Death of Mother**

The film includes the “loss of mother” both in reality and symbolically. It is presented through Aysun’s death at the night when the coup was staged. Indeed, many people during the aftermath of the coup actually experienced pressure and threat against themselves or their relatives, they were damaged physically and psychologically, and their lives changed permanently after the coup. All of these are experiences that create mistrust to the outer world. In other words, it is the realization of the fears and scenarios of being persecuted and not being able to survive which take place in the early period of infancy in the internal world. These fears refer to a lack that occurs in fulfilling maternal needs and in maternal relation.

The experiences during the coup are that this maternal lack reappears and is felt again. The film starts with the loss of a mother, now there is a lonely and orphan kid. This loss almost signifies the loss of people who were oppressed during the coup period and their lack of a mother.

#### **4.2.3.3. Daydreams against the Fear**

Another significant issue in the film is that the parallel between the inner worlds of Sadık and Deniz, that is, their phantasms, needs and fears

are similar. Deniz lost his mother or had been abandoned without her in his internal world. Sadık experiences persecution in the prison left like a child without mother. Many times in the scenes where Sadık feels fear, Deniz also experiences an excitement, and some of his day-dreams start. This day-dreaming is like a palliative or a transitional object that he has developed to amuse himself with it against the lack of his mother. Winnicott's concept of transitional object is that created or appropriated in his/her inner world as a substitution for the loss, the lack of mother, when he/she is weaned. The relationship with this object represents the things experienced with the mother: it is really present, but garnished with fantasies. We can observe the peculiarities of the relationship with this object that is real but garnished with fantasies in the attitudes of playing children, and afterwards in social sphere, in cultural activities and in arts –cinema is such an area. Deniz's daydreams create such a transitional space where he can cope with his fears. But the daydreams are not only related with his fears, they are related with Sadık's fears as well. In fact, film splits the main character and we feel that Sadık's childlike aspects are presented in Deniz character. At times, Sadık appears as though he is not with Deniz, but with his own childlike features. He seems to be an orphan, just like Deniz. Insomuch as that there is no one to call when his wife's delivery starts. He talks about his loneliness with his father at night when he comes drunk:

Sadık: "Dad, you say I left here but I don't. I couldn't... But, I couldn't even stay... I couldn't know where my home is. Always in somewhere; somewhere in-between... Because, there is always you somewhere in my mind. [...] Do you know what it means for one that there is no place to come back, dad? I had married early to be somebody to be in my life. But everything I reached had dried out, dad..."

Deniz could not be carefree and naughty enough as his uncle's children. As if his being motherless prevents him to be like them. Besides, Sadık carries the burdens of being unable to save his wife, losing the value of his ideals which he was tortured and got in prison for them, and being degraded. However, unlike Sadık, Deniz has a dream world and infantile excitements that save him. As he himself says, he is unable to bear this kind of excitements, he lost his childhood. Deniz's daydreams substitutes Sadık's lost childhood.

We first witness the meeting of fears and daydreams in their travel with train. When Deniz sees the cops in train, turns them to apaches in his daydream immediately. Sadık is strained because of cops, and we feel the trauma's arousal at the moment. However, Deniz's daydream and his joking with the cops relieve both the viewer and Sadık.

Another daydream appears when Sadık meets his father Hüseyin. Hüseyin comes by riding a horse, and he is Zorro in Deniz's daydream. After that scene, despite he sees Sadık after years and Deniz for the first time, Hüseyin turns his back with anger and leaves there. Sadık is about to go. Thus, first Sadık and then Deniz experience the feeling of being left by their fathers. Then, when they enter the home, Deniz's daydream appears as to show us inner worlds of both Deniz and Sadık: sounds of beasts in a dark forest that is damned by the horrible wizard, hellhounds that try to steal Deniz from his father –but his father hero is there and Deniz is “not scare

of'. However, Sadık's father turned his back on him and could not save him from bad persons in prison.

We see in this daydream that, Deniz's feelings which are caused from the real loss of his mother deepen when he sees the danger of losing his father: it calls horrible wizards, terrible beasts and hellhounds. This "horrible wizard" is at the same time the "persecutor mother" in fantasies of the inner world of the child, that tormented by her loss. These fantasies are related with infantile fears and they have potential of being real for children. When Deniz sees the hen that is cut for cooking and fitting of the horse with horseshoes, he cannot understand them and he is terrified. This daydream is about Sadık, too. Sadık's loss of trust for himself, people, society, and in short, for the outer world evokes; his losses in relations with his mother in his early childhood, fears caused by these losses, and his endeavors of his inner world for handling with these losses. That is, these adult traumas evoke the experiences of mainly fantasies and affects related with tolerable or intolerable compulsions of psyche occurred in early periods of life.

Another dream appears when Deniz and Sadık sleep together in the same bed. Previous scenes help us to understand the dream in this one. Sadık behaves distant to Deniz because he is ill and will die soon. That night Deniz is all alone in the middle of the forest and his super hero father disappears suddenly. Afterwards, he is at a pit top and is afraid that the horrible wizard has confined his father in this pit. At the same time, Sadık screamed and we shift to his dream: he is being tortured, bastinadoed, and

wakes up suddenly. Deniz is looking at him, as though he also sees what had happened to his father from a different standpoint by his own dream. Here again the loss of trust for outer world and loneliness, that is, something terrible has taken place in horrible forest with horrible wizard, and the person who may provide security is not present.

We see another fearful daydream just before we learn Sadık's illness. This one and the previous one make us feel that a bad thing will happen. The daydream is about the room that Hüseyin always keeps locked. In Deniz's daydream, Hüseyin holds a gigantic piece of flesh, everywhere is in darkness, dry blood and bones are present. With Hüseyin's call, a half-dog and half-human creature arrives and begins to eat this flesh. This daydream expresses early fears of harm and of being persecuted types of paranoid-shizoid anxieties. Again, it expresses the fear of death in both Sadık's and Deniz's inner worlds. In that locked room is confined terrible creatures that evoke death. What is to be happen when they are released?

#### **4.2.4. Melancholia, Mourning and Working-Through**

##### **4.2.4.1 Searching the Lost Object Where the Mourning is Possible**

In this section, we will look at how the film *Babam ve Oğlum* tries to work through the loss, melancholia and mourning.

The human subject wants to create an object that reminds him/her what he/she lost; he/she wants to control the feeling of loss. Despite the continual melancholia, she wants that object before her eyes; she wants it not to be lost. Objects created as a substitute for the loss, like transitional objects, are objects that both belong to external reality and actually possess a subjective meaning within the internal reality; namely, these are objects that belong to a transitional space in which the two realities meet. *Babam ve Oğlum* includes proper names used in this fashion. The name ‘Deniz’ – as many Leftists did in that period when they named their children – is there for the memory of Deniz Gezmiş, who was a revolutionary and killed in 1972 by the death penalty. Birgül, the fiancée of Sadık who he left behind in the town and who has had very hard days after he left, wants to name her son Sadık, but her husband does not allow for that. Still, Birgül calls her child Sadık silently, as if to repair her being abandoned in the town, to render it such that it did not happen at all. In this vein, he is with her. It is a common practice to name children after the one’s lost. For the parents, these are objects that are completely under their own control. The child is one who will do what could not be done, who will bring back the gone ones, the child is the rebirth of those lost.

Losses and traumas that could not be mourned are present in the movie. Firstly, when we look at the death of Aysun, we see that no mention is made of that in the later scenes. Only in one scene, we see Sadık mentioning to his father that he got married only not to remain alone, but that he dries up the life of everything he touches. We see here that he

blames himself for the death of his wife. However, neither in Deniz's scenes, nor in scenes with Sadık's, is this woman mentioned; she is not remembered.<sup>7</sup> It is as if she is nonexistent, did not exist at all. In the same vein, as was mentioned above, it is as if the torture Sadık underwent or, it is even better to put it in this way, the military coup that caused the deaths of Aysun and Sadık is nonexistent. These two traumas are displaced by family problems and it is only Sadık's illness that the film attends to and mourns. The process of coup d'état and Aysun's death which, we can argue, represents its symbolic meaning are displayed almost momentarily at the very beginning; they take place and end instantly. The film lets us feel that actually the cause of all that happened is not the military coup but Sadık's abandoning of his family and his father's not behaving to him differently. As the film progresses, we see the story of a man whose ties with his family, especially his father, are broken and who will have to abandon his son as well: the attempt for reparation of the broken family ties and the death of the protagonist despite that.

In the film, Sadık is rejected by his father despite all his good intentions and his attempts to build up his relations --- up until his illness becomes evident and he gets hospitalized, up until the son pays for the betrayal against the father and the anger is replaced by guilt. Thus, the drama resulting from the estrangement and break from the family transpires; they will lose their son again just at the moment when it seems that

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<sup>7</sup> This might be related also to the gender politics at the film.



everything could be repaired. All losses in the movie are transposed into this problem, are felt through it; hence, the loss that can be mourned is this loss.

The time period when Sadık is in the hospital passes away with the pain of the pending loss and with a more sorrowful process of making farewell. One makes peace with the aunt Gülbeyaz and Hüseyin; one spends time together with the brother Salim as if to make for the years lost; the abandoned fiancée comes to the hospital for a visit and forgives Sadık. All of this takes place in an intense melodramatic atmosphere; nostalgic elements are used. In the hospital, Salim looks together with Sadık at the old photographs; Birgül comes to visit with the cookies she used to make when they were children and which Sadık liked very much.

Finally, the most significant farewell is made during the conversation between the father and the son. The topic comes to how Deniz will remember Sadık, and Hüseyin both answers and, actually, asks Sadık: “The children always remember their fathers as they wish to remember them. Isn’t it true, Sadık?” And after this, Sadık is lost.

With the loss of Sadık, tragedy and grief cover over the film. Deniz loses someone he is close to for the first time –he does not know what is losing her mother since she is never present. Now he loses both his father and his mother. Hüseyin feels a deep guilt about the past. He stops the car when they are on the way to funeral ceremony, comes out of the car. He loses all his self-control and expresses his pain openly. He cries that everything has happened because of him and that he lost his son because he

could not keep him beside. Meanwhile the aunt Gülbeyaz wants Salim (who stands at a distance from Hüseyin) to run onto his father and never stops. She yells Hüseyin that “catch it... stop!” Salim runs and Hüseyin cannot stop him and fall down. Thereby it is understood that one cannot prevent things to happen and feel of guilt is senseless.

Afterwards, the passing of time is shown through a series of short scenes. Deniz is unhappy and inert so that it seems as if he lost his childlike excitement. He looks like Sadık after his wife’s death and after prison. Yet, differently, this time the loss will be mourned, it will be articulated. Because it is easier articulating Sadık’s death than talking about the torture and Aysun’s death in the night that coup took place.

After some days, Deniz starts school; when the family picture is taken everybody feels the absence of “someone” and in the next scene Deniz is now talking about his father for the first time after his death. What he wants is not an “ideal” father like “superman,” not a dead father but a real one, an ordinary father but one who is alive. For Deniz’s mourning to end, Hüseyin will ultimately open the door of the secret room. In the room, there is a camera, movies which include Sadık’s childhood as well and a projector. A final farewell is made to Sadık when the whole family watches those shots. Deniz-the-child makes farewell to Sadık-the-child. Hüseyin gives the camera to Deniz as a gift. From now on, Deniz has an instrument to make his dream world exist in the real world as well. Namely, the rupture from

reality can be transformed into something in which the dream and reality meet: into a play.

Deniz's is confronted with the reality of the external world due to the death of his father. From now on, the dream world and the reality can meet at one point. He will thus learn to stay there and to transform his dreams into real objects, maybe into a movie. Maybe just like this film's director, Çağan Irmak himself did. So, cinema becomes a substitute for the traumatic lost and it has a potential of taking memories into life. With this camera, Deniz will be able to do things which the children who have dreams can do when they grow up. In this way, he will reanimate his losses, remember them – as, in one sense, this movie does.

In the last scene, Deniz goes out to the garden in early morning when nobody is around; he grasps the camera and as he looks through the lens of the camera, he sees his father. The camera has made his father visible again. At this moment, he understands that he will no longer see his father, but he will not be alone either. This time he really is not frightened.

#### **4.2.5. The Created Space for the Viewer**

##### **4.2.5.1. Identification with Lost**

As Freud mentions tragedies are a mourning play and it may be thought that melodramas are also. They play to the Ego of the viewer and

establish identifications through the movie characters and the events in the narrative. While they incite the needs and wishes of the Id and the Superego, they ultimately offer a solution which the Ego can accept and which will not put into trouble its identification. On the other hand, in the case of traumas and losses, this work also includes mourning of loss, the narration of the loss and the working through of the loss for the sake of reparation in the inner world. The melodramatic structure of the movie is constituted by elements through which the loss is felt. These melodramatic elements represent the struggle of the characters to deal with the dramas and the mourning. At the same time, these elements create an intense emotional effect and thus project their own material to the viewer. They ensure that the viewer herself enters the movie together with her own losses and her own subjective material.

The viewer is made to feel the “loss”. We often feel the loss related to the past throughout the film. We feel it in the compassionate look of Fatma, Deniz's babysitter, to this boy without a mother, on the faces of her and the whole family when Sadık goes back to his family, on the face of Sadık's ex-girlfriend whom he got engaged first and then broke up with when leaving the town and finally in every dialogue and visuality that take place after Sadık dies.

#### **4.2.5.2. Restore Points**

Some short breaks to rest are given in order to let the viewer be recovered from the feeling of loss so that they could have this feeling again

in a following scene. The things that give this relief are, for instance, the childish dreams of Deniz, daily conversations and jokes of the people in the town, quarrels between the aunt and Hüseyin, childish Salim and the states of his family.

We cannot see this amusing state in only Sadık's face because nobody but he knows the truth that will change everything in other people's naive and childish lives. The truth of that he has a fatal disease and of the torture that is not usually shown to the viewer, but felt. He undertakes the tasks to carry these truths.

#### **4.2.5.3. Waiting for the Negative**

It seems that dangers are anticipated by the viewer before they take place in the film. This preparation can be considered as an effort to control. Preventing the danger, not for knowing what is going to happen but because of knowing that the danger is approaching. We can say that the characters and some other events inform us that the danger is near before bad events really happen.

The forthcoming disaster is whispered to us in the first scene in the conversation between Aysun and Sadık about how close the birth labor is and that they should be careful so that “nothing bad will happen”. Then Aysun dies, the coup has taken place that night, so no matter how much they tried to take precautions, the disaster could not be prevented. The film makes us expect this.

The next tension occurs when Deniz sees apaches getting on the

wagon. We go back to reality from this day-dream by apaches' turning into police officers. A childish switch to the tension Sadık will have with the police officers takes place for the viewer. Deniz is there and he is relaxed enough to make fun of this situation, which means we could be relaxed, too. This scene and other daydream and game scenes shown by means of Deniz appeal to childish side of the viewer, catch their affection in this childishness, increase the tension and relax the viewer as long as they reflect Sadık's fears as discussed before.

Another place where the viewer is let to feel the danger is the moment Sadık first arrives home and moves to his room with his stuff. In the past a break took place, his relations with his family were suspended for a while, and now they join together again. Maybe, everything can be repaired. Nuran, fearing that this will not happen, asks Sadık: “We will get done with everything, right?” Sadık answers: “We will, mother!” In just the next scene, Deniz, who has moved to her room recently, goes towards the window. He is heart-broken as he feels that his father is not as close to him anymore as he has been. This “cold stance” Deniz feels makes us feel the “separation” between people who come together after many years. He witnesses Nuran moving a chicken onto the ground and chopping it. We do not see the chopping scene. Deniz’s scream makes us understand how much he gets terrified and we experience an uncanny feeling. This is the second scream in the movie taking place just before moving to another scene (the first one is Aysun’s scream after the start of her labor pains, and that one is heard when moving from the night scene to the morning scene where we see

her dying). This scene, as in the case of the first scream, informs us about an approaching. Actually, through this, the answer to Nuran's question appears. In one of the later scenes when the talk is again on Sadık's leaving and coming back, Nuran whispers to us: "It will be good; everything will be fine, with God's permission." Precisely because this is uttered, we know that there is a possibility that everything is not going to be fine.

We start to see the possibility of breaking down this happy family portrait. Firstly, Salim notices that Sadık coughs and makes us notice that, too. Then they have a conversation:

Salim: "We are happy thanks to God, right Sadık?"  
Sadık: "We are happy brother..."  
Salim: "May God protect this Sadık."

Finally, it is understood from the names Hüseyin gave to his children that he was actually trying to take a precaution against the things that he is afraid of coming true. Sadık asks his father: "Father, why did you give us these names? Have you been afraid of us since the beginning?" He wanted his children to be "loyal" [Sadık] and "safe" [Salim]. Yet, Sadık has made his fear come true by leaving home first and then by dying.

#### **4.2.5.4. Displacement of Aggression: Melancholic Paralysis, Victimhood and Closure**

There are parts in the movie in which the danger, loss and separation are dramatized and turned into sorrow and intensive melancholy apart from these uncanny moments viewer is made to feel these feelings.

Despite Hüseyin ignores him, one day Deniz holds Hüseyin's hand because he is scared of the horse beside them. Suddenly an intense

emotionality is experienced. His hands dither, and his eyes fills with tears. In fact, this scene makes us feel the pain of times passed apart and possible experiences that are not exist. At that time, we hear a sad melody.

The conversation between Deniz and Sadık in the hospital actually reflects childish wish of the viewer. Deniz asks his father: “You are going to be okay before the school starts, aren't you?” And Sadık answers: “Of course I will.”

The viewer is given the option to say goodbye to his losses and disappointments during the hospital period including Sadık's saying goodbye to his past and his family. But all in all the fact for the viewer is that the protagonist has been sacrificed. This farewell prepares people for a lot of crying. In this crying there is no place for the coup itself anymore. Not only are the ones responsible for this not blamed for anything, but also this loss and sorrow completely turned into a family's private drama. The only things explained are the father's speaking of the things that he could not speak of, his regrets and continuing life together with mourning as a family.

There is a gap here. Is it possible to leave the past to the past and move on by only crying and remembering the ones lost? The question that the film asks and answers is the following one: “Would it be possible to prevent the loss if Hüseyin did not allow his son to leave or did not strain him to such an extent that the son needed to leave?” The film comforts us by saying that the loss could not be prevented. However, the question that remains suspended in the air is: “Would it not be possible to prevent this



and similar personal dramas if the military coup did not take place and the military dictatorship did not torment so many people?” Actually, the answer is clear. The losses caused by the military coup could certainly be prevented. However, this answer does not comfort us as it brings to mind the following conclusion: “If so, the conditions leading to that should be discussed and the persons who took part in it should be made responsible for their actions.” Instead of discomforting the viewer with such a conclusion and thus leading him/her to think further about that, the film seems to have chosen to end its story with an emotional discharge and the subsequent acceptance of the loss.

By means of a constructed split, the aggression of the viewer is divided into two and, by means of the displacement of aggression, the aggression is denied by the identification of the viewer with victimhood; the viewer is offered the chance to remain in a white zone instead of a gray one.

Hüseyin is a man who strictly controls his feelings. That he cannot but stop the car on the way to Sadık’s funeral, that he jumps onto the road and cries out his pain and his feeling of guilt is actually a strong incitement for the viewer herself to let go and feel her emotions with all their intensity. In this vein, all the pains and all the guilt can be visible now. Clearly, after this intense emotional discharge, one overcomes this feeling. As it is shown that Hüseyin cannot stop Salim as the latter runs, we are told that Hüseyin could neither stop Sadık and thus the move away from the feeling of guilt is made. Namely, the viewer can feel as intensely as she does and then with

her own emotional discharge can feel comforted without having to ask “why?”

The film does not render the death of Aysun and the things happening to Sadık in the prison talkable for the viewer. What is easier to talk about for the viewer is Sadık’s death, the loss of the family. Indeed, this is why the film substitutes one trauma for the other: to make it easier to cry about, to make it easier to talk about, to touch the real trauma only slightly and subdue its pain with another trauma.

#### **4.2.5.5. “Mourning Play” and Camera**

At the end of the movie, we watch Sadık-the-child in the shots taken by a camera. This video makes visible the lost one. From now on, Deniz too will use the camera to store his losses. Namely, the film gives to the viewer its suggestion against the losses: “The child in you is injured, your dreams are destroyed, and you are frightened. But do not be afraid to grow up; the dreams can be built up again with movies.” At the same time, it moves the viewer out of the symbolic world of the film and brings his/her back to reality. The camera Deniz uses is an instrument of some sort to create memory, which the movie itself does. With this camera Deniz will have the chance to move his dealings in his inner world to the external world.

Dreams are replaced by a play that is closer to the external reality. This play ground is a transitional space where Deniz mourns his loss and

which allows for the viewer to do the same by means of the movie. The camera, camera shots and that Deniz sees his deceased father on his side when he looks through the lens of the camera disclose to us that everything we watched was actually a play of the camera. Yet, this is a play which tells about the reality itself.

When we inquire about the basic strategy that the film deploys as regards the experience it offers to the viewer, we see that it uses the strategy of *cure*. While the fact remains that the protagonist is dead, the wounds are dressed and they are healed. As we elaborated upon in the theoretical discussion section, this strategy meets the need to forget of the viewer and of society. With the condition of melancholy and victimhood that it creates, the film betrays the inability to represent the events within a story by establishing a memory, and the tendency to forget. Besides, we can say that, with the scene of Aysun's death, the film deploys the strategy of *shock* vis-à-vis the viewer, and that this actually leads the viewer less to witness the coup d'état but provides her wish to escape from the reality of the coup d'état with more support.

### 4.3. Beynelmilel

#### 4.3.1. Credits and Plot

*Director:* Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Muharrem Gülmez

*Writer:* Sırrı Süreyya Önder

*Producer:* Şükrü Avşar

*Cast:* Özgü Namal (Gülendam), Cezmi Baskın (Abuzer), Nazmi Kırık (Tekin), Umurt Kurt (Haydar), Meral Okay (Aydeniz), Dilber Ay (Arzum), Bahri Beyat (Mahmut)

*Genre:* Drama

*Year of Production and Vision:* 2006

*Identification of Film Characters and Plot:*

*Gülendam* is a young woman who lost her mother during the childbirth. She lives with her father, her grand father and her uncle in a town in Adıyaman. She and her family are a part of a community composed of musicians called “Gevende”. *Gülendam* is an enthusiastic and naive young girl trying to get what she wants. She is attached to her father very much. She falls in love with Haydar, and she does her best in order to attract his attention: reads books and tries to learn how to become a revolutionist. But she is also afraid of the fact that being a revolutionary may prevent her from having a happy family with Haydar. Militarist junta must be collapsed so that Haydar can have time for love affairs. That is why she is very angry with the junta, too.

*Haydar* is a young student who studies in Istanbul, in the Faculty of Political Sciences and he has just become a leftist. He has a

childish belief in revolutionism. He witnesses how militarist regime has changed everything when he returns to the town. He thinks that doing nothing against this situation would be dishonorable. He is affiliate with Gülendám, yet he has no time to deal with love affairs. The militarist junta will collapse, so he should fight like every other revolutionist.

*Abuzer*, Gülendám's father, is an instrumentalist who is trying to make a living. He is really attached to his daughter, who is named after his mother who died when Abuzer was 4 or 5.

*Tekin* is Abuzer's brother. He is a foxy musician. He deals with things about arranging places for the night club and the relations with the soldiers. *Mahmut* is the grandfather. He complains, and he wants to be taken care of all the time. According to him, he is on the brink of the grave.

*Aydeniz* and *Arzum* are nightclub singers who are over middle age. Their work is also affected by the militarist regime. They go to Adıyaman through Tekin's arrangements in order to sing in the night club which will be established by Gevendes.

The film starts in 1982, with the scene in which Gevendes, who use a truck as a night club secretly because night clubs are banned by the military regime, are caught by the soldiers. After this event the commander in town wants Gevendes to form an orchestra and play in the welcoming ceremony for the members of the military council who will visit the town soon. Of course, one cannot resist the wish of the army and they start to work on the anthems to be played in the ceremony. Meanwhile Haydar comes to the town from Istanbul and Gülendám tries to understand what it means to be a

revolutionist. Haydar is planning a protest for the day on which military council will come. He gives Güendam the gramophone record of the March of Communist International for to record it in a cassette; they plan to secretly play this march to protest on the day of the ceremony. While she is listening to the march, her father asks what that is. She tells him the lie that it is a song to “welcome the spring”. Abuzer likes the march and tells his friends that he has composed it, so he starts to work on it to play it with the orchestra while welcoming the military council. Haydar's plan collapses when his father finds and breaks the recording and the cassette into pieces. Then they plan to prepare a banner to use it secretly on that day, but people of the town have decided to make banners to welcome the council and finished all pieces of clothes in the town. All through the film we watch how the town people cringe against the oppression of the military dictatorship. Haydar, all of whose plans collapse prepares his own banner by cutting a military banner with his revolutionist friends. Güendam, who does not know this, prepares her own banner with ribbons and colorful lines by stealing her grandfather's cerecloth. The following day as the council arrives in the town and as Haydar and his friends are getting ready to open the banner, they hear the orchestra play the song International. The orchestra is surrounded by armed people. At the same time Güendam opens her banner on the top floor of the house where she went to watch the ceremony. Haydar tries to tell Güendam something by shouting in order to protect her from getting hurt and then a shot of a gun is heard. We see Haydar's dead body in blood lying on the ground. The cerecloth Güendam has prepared fell on

him. All orchestra members are taken into custody. Film continues with the scenes where we see Güendam's sadness and her father being questioned and tortured. In the last scene the camera goes into one of the squatter house near the area with factories. We see that the time has passed and Güendam has a daughter. There is news about a Russian army chorus and they are singing the International. The film finishes with her daughter's question about which song it is, and Güendam's answer in tears that it is her dead father's composition.

#### **4.3.2. Narration of Traumatic Losses**

From the beginning of the film we witness the pressures of the militarist regime and how it turns the daily life into a prison. People have to do everything with fear and secretly. Soldiers have to be praised, every single word, everything has to be considered first by the eyes of the military. People wait for curfew to finish at the train station when they arrive there at night; soldiers are not asked why they want something to be done, but they are immediately done; people are afraid to ask for information about their relatives who are in custody; some songs are forbidden to be played by musicians for they are considered to be “dangerous” and so on. The army wants people to be frightened. We see the prison and the political prisoners (people who are members of “Dev-Sol” and “Emeğin Birliği”) who have been captured when Gevendes are arrested since they are running an underground night club in a truck.

It seems that people in town have accepted this new authority more than the military power itself. This actually shows us the picture of how the daily violence of military junta was realized in the surveillance of the ordinary people and by their taking part. It is explained in the movie that political violence is not only physical violence against political people, it is also a process that everyone experiences by being made to feel powerless and desperate, and by being made to believe that perpetrators are almighty and resisting is useless. Gevendes are respected just because they wear uniforms on the contrary to the past. They wear French uniforms that are used in order to animate the enemies during the shows because these are the only uniforms around. Yet even those uniforms cause fear and authority for the civilians.

Streets are filled with banners praising the army: “All five of you are pashas, you run for help on difficulty” [“Beşiniz de paşasınız, zorluklara koşarsınız”], “We owe you the peace we have” [“Huzurumuzu size borçluyuz”]. The more people are afraid, the more the coup is praised speciously. Turkish flags and Kenan Evren's posters are hung in shops. This situation seems to validate the assertion that the subject who does not (cannot) do anything against the cruelty of the aggressor idealizes him and tries to regain the self-value that has been lost by identifying himself with the aggressor's power and trying to possess this power. The army is everywhere because it has become the ordinary people themselves; violence and pressure is felt all the time. In this traumatic situation as perpetrators are



continuing their pressures, victims are like to have accepted their power and introjected it. They continue this fear and cruelty by themselves.

Since the modern government was founded there has been daily violence that was created as a government policy and has been carried on by means of military authority and this violence is not only experienced during the junta period. Military commanders scorn the clothes of Gevendes and music they make. Their clothes have to be changed immediately for a “modern” style and they have to become a “modern” orchestra. Although there is not a chef among Gevendes, one of them is made a maestro. Discriminatory and militarist pressure is a reflection of modernism project that has been in operation since the foundation of the Republic. Besides, Kurdish songs are forbidden and Turkishness is praised by the army.

The most notable part about the traumas in the movie is that the film tells us the bond established between the victims and the perpetrators. In fact the oppressing side is directly shown, the doers are obvious. However, the film discloses that civilian people are tortured, but in a way they also use this power position whenever they can. Even Gevendes make use of their uniforms and their relations with the army. The system creating the coup is criticized.

### **4.3.3. The Imaginative World of the Film**

#### **4.3.3.1. Allegory against Political Violence**

Allegory is a narrative form, which refers that the narrative elements represent a moral, political, social or religious matter beyond their literal meanings (Fletcher, 1964). This form takes attention on a fact, and makes the relevant wish as real in play-world of the narration. In the movies it emerges as a sarcastic and ironic language in general and we see that in *Beynelmilel* through the black humor. This provides a fore-pleasure through symbolic expression of aggression.

The film uses black humor and music as a transitional object in coping with the depressive affects and anxiety as the result of trauma. Humor makes visible both the society's aggression toward perpetrators and its guilt for the experiences. It mirrors the effort of working through.

Despite presenting a victimhood experience, the film calls to account the perpetrators and the people who permit the violence by making them as object of humor. Namely, without avoiding to call the violence, perpetrators and also the paradoxal experience of victims, it allows expressing the aggression. The film also criticizes the victims for their childishness and ignorance of the reality. It does not support the trauma driven split, instead, creates a "grey zone" where aggression can work through by describing both the victim and the perpetrators and making them as subjects of the narration (Radstone, 2001a, p. 76).

#### **4.3.3.2. The Lack of Mother**

Like *Babam ve Oğlum*, there is a real maternal loss in this story, too. Gülendaml had lost her mother in birth and Abuzer lost his mother when he was 4 or 5 years old. As mentioned previously, the first representation of the external trauma is related to the symbolization of the maternal loss. This maternal loss in the story is meaningful that it symbolizes the losses caused by coup. The protagonist of the film, Gülendaml, both moves the losses by herself (so we carry it, too), and realizes a reparation with her persistence and joy. She is named after Abuzer's mother name, already; she is the one who will compensate the loss.

#### **4.3.3.3. Nostalgia: Lost Childhood**

Although *Beynelmilel* try to criticize the past, the nostalgia for a time of happiness in the past and childishness of characters dominate the film. Like the features of the first film, this aspect of *Beynelmilel* evokes the trauma of early infantile life and the maternal needs. The substantial loss in maternal relations may cause the subject's try to accept the reality or may result to leave the maternal relationship growing up immediately. These two states create same situations: being immature psychically and having to leave childhood before to be prepared. To have to grow up quickly or to be immature as not accepting the reality may bring of the need to regain the childhood. Nostalgia in cultural realm, according to Suner (2006), reveals a longing for childhood, and indicates that the state of pure happiness

experienced “once upon a time”. This is the time when there is a maternal care and it is now vanished.

Humor as a political criticism may be effective in deciphering the social reality of the period, but it is dysfunctional as a language for social mourning. Black humor makes the viewer feel the conditions of the period biting and contains a narration of what September 12 period is. But the grief reactions that are required for acceptance of the loss are not present in it. Instead of this, there are nostalgia and humor as defense against grief, means that not being able to mourn. That is, the film contains both a criticism and an effort of working through the past, and an acting-out. Despite all the traumatic reality and cunning actions of the people in town in their relations with power, past appears as a town life with naivety and childishness in the film.

Gülendam dreams to study politics for being a *kaymakam*, governor of a provincial district, and to marry Haydar and have children. Haydar dreams that the coup will end in 2 or 3 months. What we face at the end of the film is staggering reality. Apparently, the coup has taken not only Haydar but also Gülendam’s dreams of studying politics at university from Gülendam. Her father has died. We have not been informed what is going on in that period, but presumably very bad things have been coming. The warmth and liveliness has gone. She is now a low-income worker woman living in a squatter house and still reading leftist books.

#### **4.3.3.4. Music as Play**

During the aftermath of the coup, like other art areas, music became a subject of censorship and propaganda. Songs were prohibited for they had been deemed dangerous or were played forcibly and constantly on streets or in prisons as a way of torture. In the film, music is used for deciphering the ideology of the coup and as part of a play of rebellion. Songs are not dangerous; on the contrary, they are meaning-creators. Music represents both the memory of the period and the losses.

Let's take Eskişehir March first. Commandant wants Gevendes to practice this march like a military orchestra. This march is also a melody adopted by a political group, "Dev-Genç" [Revolutionary Youth], as a revolutionary march. That is, this march is also associated with a memory against military coup.

Another song emerges from a local practice of tape-recording. Musicians record a song. Gülendäm, who works with Gevendes, reads a tearful poem in a tearful folk song, and Haydar sits against her. She laughs when she looks at him but the song tells a painful story. Then, Abuzer plays the song that reminds Gülendäm her deceased mother and makes her cry. In the next scene film tell us with Gülendäm's words, "crying is the sibling of laughing, one cannot cry then he/she cannot laugh."

The third song is a Kurdish folk dance song called "Lorke" which is often sang in wedding ceremonies. Abuzer doesn't want to play it because it is in the "prohibited list" but guests insist. As a solution, the song is played quietly and they danced quietly, too. When soldiers enter suddenly, they

switch into another song “Türkiyem” [My Turkey] song. Here the nationalist and militarist mentality of the period is ridiculed. There are other scenes in the film where the military regime is ridiculed by music.

The last piece is March of International, which is at the center of the subject and the film is named after it. Abuzer says to his friends that he himself has composed the song, and explains the song as: “Think about the spring, the children and the birds.” At the end of the film, this spring song, March of Communist International, turns to a mourning song for Gülendâd that reminds her of her deceased father and lover just like the other song that signifies her deceased mother.

#### **4.3.4. Melancholia, Mourning and Working Through**

##### **4.3.4.1. The Struggle of Mourning: Nostalgia and Humor**

The process of mourning takes place through affects. These affects are internal efforts to repair lost object. Mourning ends up with accepting the loss of the object, whereas melancholia is denial of the loss of the object, and in spite of suffering, insistence of the inner world to associate with the object. Nostalgia is a buffer solution in the middle of these two attitudes: on the one hand, it is accepted that the object is not present and belongs to the past; on the other hand, the desire for turning back to the old happy days is satisfied by calling up the past to today in nostalgia (Denis, 2010).

There are certain elements in the film that represent the past and attempt to create a memory of it. This attitude provides testimony for the reality of the period. In addition to narrating the past, it is recalled with a nostalgic longing in detailed scenes. For example, loss and nostalgia take a dominant part in the scene that halkevi (community center) becomes night club. Inside of the room is quite empty. Tables, chairs, paintings on the walls, books and the stage indicate the people who were there before, but now there is a lack of them. This presentation of the past in nostalgia creates an effort of mourning in itself. However, despite the film constitutes the memory of the past and experienced difficulties, it also reflects an incomplete mourning by not to combine this former naivety with today's reality.

In fact this grief is a resistance in order not to experience the loss in a realistic way, that is, it is an unfeeling. Nostalgia is a remembering of the past losses via missing and idealizing them; so means not to accept the losses and work through them, not being able to mourn for them.

Black humor is also used in the film predominantly. Actually, it functions against suffering, too –it helps speaking on pain and aggression in a more symbolic and acceptable manner. However, rather than repressing these affects completely, humor, as a defense, creates a safe space to face them. It is a conscious way of reflecting the traumatic affects to another area. In *Beynelmilel*, this intervention is used against the compulsion of external reality, but the film also creates a space for aggressive affects

(including guilt) to be discharged, and so provides an opportunity to come into terms with the reality of the loss and mourning.

#### **4.3.4.2. Growing of the Child**

In *Beynelmilel* the protagonist is a woman and does not have a mother. Mourning takes place with accompaniment of Güendam's emotions, her growing old and being a mother. The film does not merge the childish naivety with the reality of the coup; there is a split between these two things. On the banner that Güendam prepares for the day when the council comes, beside two hearth symbols it is read "Wish No More Juntas" –a naïve expression. Her protest and her expectation are so childish.

With transition from past to future, we do not see what has taken place in passing years, but we suddenly smash into growth and the reality. Film shows that this town life is not present anymore and nothing will be the same after Haydar's murder. All along the play-like film, it is the first real loss. The story does not try to mourn after Haydar's death and its consequences. It shows us this fact immediately. The film itself functions symbolically as a tribute to losses. Protagonist is now grown; and there is a real child who may be informed about the past events and who may convey the story to future.



#### **4.3.5. The Created Space for the Viewer**

Our identification with Güendam brings us back into the condition of being a person who has lost the mother, father and love, and turning into a mother by growing up.

Use of humor and details which produce memory provide the viewers to make this identification by creating a cognitive distance between viewers and the story. The story helps immediate victims of the period to identify themselves by criticizing clearly the perpetrators.

##### **4.3.5.1. Talking about Past in a Safe Space**

The interaction and dialogues between Güendam and Haydar, flirting between the grandfather Mahmut and night club singer Arzum, and the father Abuzer and Aydeniz, (beside creating anger) the artfulness of the town people, and music keep us inside the film against the existing outside reality. Furthermore, the film, by making viewers feel good and naivety, does what other nostalgic and dramatic films do: viewers feel themselves in safety, and representation of the past in their mind remains disjointed from today. Besides it puts forward the need of confrontation with the past by deciphering the perpetrators, doing critics of the whole population, exhibiting the political perspective about military coup and September 12 clearly, and preferring not to provide feeling relieved.

Through the film some dialogues take place as showing the examples of coming to terms with the past. In one of these dialogues, Güendam's wishes of heart and Haydar's ideals are compared:

Gülendam: I wish you don't deal with such things. How should I know that you don't get in trouble; god forbid.

Haydar: Look, Gülendam, they locked thousands of people in jail. Yet they will come down in 2 or 3 months, but still, somebody must react against it. It is our debt of honor to our people.

This dialogue has a special emphasis for persons with political identities that affected immediately from military junta period. At the beginning, persons from leftist movement had not believed that the coup period would take that long and nobody would react against it. It reflects a dissatisfaction. The utterance of "2 or 3 months" make today's viewers to look back and emphasizes for today's viewers that the time passed without any social confrontation process is very long.

Another confrontation takes place in the dialogue between Gülendam and her father. Gülendam repeats the revolutionary objections that she learned before, against her uncle who wants to turn the community centre to a night club: "Don't you scare from slap of revolutionaries?" As soon as she finished her words, her father slaps into face of Gülendam. The slap is as if for viewers also. Abuzer adds after the slap: "My mother died of starvation. [...] The people, yours, I have been slapped by it since my birth." The film calls us to the reality leaving the play. We feel that the town life, play and the humor will end. Story begins to turn into a tragedy suddenly, while everything is alive and well. Then we see Haydar's death and Abuzer's taken off to being questioned, because he says the march is his own composition.

Another dialogue takes place between Haydar and Gülendir, too. Gülendir console Haydar on that Haydar's big brother breaks down the cassette of "International" and they cannot find canvas for banner:

Haydar: "When your children asked sometime that what you had did these days of blood, you can reply them that we could not find canvas for banner but at least we had cursed them."

Gülendir: "I hope. If god permits to see those days... Maybe I will do a surprise action. If the last matter is a piece of rag... We won't say to children that we could not find canvas sometime."

You cannot make revolution with a piece of canvas, but in the reality of martial rule a piece of canvas and a piece of marsh may cause a person to die. This childish but conscientiously right dialogue allusively says that a piece of canvas could not solve the problem. And shows that only a march and a piece of canvas is able to make trouble for him.

#### **4.3.5.2. Grey Zones: Blaming and Responsibility of the Guilt**

The film points at the perpetrators to blame by showing its political perspective manifestly. Military coup is caricaturized and criticized openly. Victims and the people that affected from the period are criticized indirectly, too. In that manner, the film does not ignore aggression. However, the film does not include scenes of violence. We do not see what the political persons experience in prison or outside. Gülendir, Abuzer and Haydar seem to experience these terrible events because of their misfortune. Instead of a victim of September 12 for identification of viewers, naive and good persons or the people that sublimates its aggressor are presented in the film.

The visual and auditory materials in the film are not used in a manner that vicariously traumatizes the viewers. What we watch is violence that dominates all over the life –but not the open violence upon victims. The film tries to work through the loss without having a traumatic impact on the viewer. We do not see the tracks of this real violence even on the faces of perpetrators; they are also childish thanks to nostalgia. We don't suspect that any bad thing will happen until last scene; even Haydar's death happens in a scramble.

The film does not deny the story of the coup or narrate it by replacing it with other stories. Besides, it shows neither the perpetrators with their aggression nor victims -except Gülendaml in the last scene- with violence upon them. This attitude paves the way for forgiveness; and at the end the film prevents this inclination for being developed fully. Now there is a carnage that requires offenders to assume responsibility.

#### **4.3.5.3. Facing with the Lost**

We see Güendam while she is crying at the last scene. It is also an invitation for viewers. It is not a happy end of a playful and childish life in the town of past, but an end of reality in a cold and uncomfortable squatter house; the viewer is left there.

Using melodramatic elements, the film contains a cure strategy. Besides, it also provides witnessing for us through creating memory by its use of details and its sarcastic style. The end of the film makes us confront the very reality and loss. In a few seconds of passage from past to future, we

see that the protagonist still feels a deep suffering for the events as if they has happened just yesterday. For viewers, they have taken place only a few seconds ago. We see that Güendam stands up and survives; she even has a daughter, against the passing years. It provides support for viewer also. We first think on what Güendam has experienced through these years, and then we ask this question for viewer herself: what he/she has done when these events have happened or after?

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1 Limitations of Study**

The examination of a subjective object of study by a subjective observer bears the claim of reliability as any other scientific data does. Psychoanalysis enables a fertile point of view which enables a deep understanding to the object of study and an approach which avoids reductionism as far as the theoretical language allows. On the other hand, taking psychoanalysis beyond the limits of analytic frame and turning artistic-cultural products into objects of psychoanalytic interpretation leads to some frailties: the lack of intersubjective relations that constitutes the theory in the examination and the risk of negation of historical, political and sociological sides of the problem.

First of all, the fact that psychoanalytic oriented movie analysis does not depend on a real mutual relation constitutes a restriction. Per contra, there is no method which enables the interpretation of the impacts of the movie to the viewer from a psychoanalytic approach in a psychoanalytic framework. At this point, although the material itself does not "talk", the impact of the movies on the researcher and her own subjective experience is utilized as a tool in this study.

Secondly, the discussions concerning the collective trauma in which the political and social processes involved are inadequate caused by both the narrow scope of the research and researcher's own lack of knowledge.

Lastly, the study has not included all the September 12th movies in a more general perspective towards the collective struggle as a master thesis limits the duration and the length of the study.

## **5.2. The Evaluation of the Analysis**

When we look at the symbolic structures of the films and the ways they discuss trauma, we understand that they reflect social needs, the ways of remembering and defense, they satisfy this need for their viewers and recreates this need.

In *Babam ve Oğlum*, there are many traumas of protagonist about family. Two of them are because of the coup: Aysun's death in labor and Sadık's illness and death because of torture. Though, this fact is ignored. Details and social processes of the coup are unclear, fractured and ambiguous. The perpetrators are not pointed out. We feel only the violence. Not survivors but a victim is present. The film does not make viewers confront the coup and period after it. In *Babam ve Oğlum*, the reality of coup is substituted by the family dramas (in accord with the defenses of individual and social structure) and the military authority is substituted by paternal authority.

Çağan Irmak, the director of the film *Babam ve Oğlum*, declared at his interviews that he did not intend to narrate the September 12th period, he put the subject how the lives of ordinary people were affected in this process into his film and his main focus is father-son relationship. However general

reactions of the viewer and comments on the movie show that it is taken as a September 12th film. It gives viewers this impression apart from the purpose.

The characters in the movie are not shown through simplified, as only good or bad. Yet, there is no place for people to be accused as being responsible for the crime and suffering or for aggression against them. Military coup and perpetrators are not sufficiently narrated. The movie reflects how the people who are damaged during this period take themselves as victims. Aggression, like trauma, is displaced and pointed to the person himself but not to the ones who are responsible; and guiltiness is felt like self-pity. We feel sorry a lot for the protagonist. In the film the torture and doers of it which is the reason of Sadık's illness is not cursed by Sadık's family. His family says nothing when they suffer for their son's death. Instead there is guiltiness which is told through the statement: "I wish I hadn't let him go" and at last a kind of relief likes "you cannot prevent the fate and the death" ["olacakla öleceğe engel olunamaz"]. Aggression, as Volkan (2006) stated, is experienced as an acting-out in the feeling of helplessness and in a self-oriented way, which is social masochism. The film let only its hero die instead of focusing on righteous anger against an outer real object.

Sufferings and anxiety in the film pave the way for mourning. While presenting pains of the Sadık to us, the film creates an area where these pains may be bearable through the daydreams of Deniz. Feeling the self as worthless, loss of reliability of external world, lack of hope, lack of



enthusiasm, all of them are the experiences that evoke the real or symbolic maternal loss. Trauma is realization of the childhood fears, that is, a child without mother is emerged into adult psyche. The film works through the infant and adult selves of the viewers separately, and uses infant Deniz and adult Sadık as separate selves of the same subject. Against the fear, daydreams provide escape for both viewers and characters in the film, and create a transitional space that difficulties are worked through. These daydreams appear either before or after the stressful scenes. At the end of the film, they turned into a play with camera as being linked with reality. Departed Sadık revives again through the video records shot in his childhood.

On the other hand, there is an inability of mourning about the coup process, which is the basis of what is going on. In Lutzky's terms (1989) this film points to a failure in the effort of reparation both in the lives of the characters and in terms of function in culture. In other words an effort that has reparative purpose turns itself into suffering and points to self-aggression.

The film creates a situation in which viewer is also trapped in the feeling of being a victim. This also causes viewer to have a wish to escape from the reality of the trauma as one could have this feeling only for a certain time. This film shows the social situation of September the 12th (without intention) and the victim figure in it knows that he/she is right, he/she does not regret, but says: "Was it worth all of these, would it have been better to stay home, have a family and not to get involved in

anything?”. He/she stopped thinking about the role of perpetrators and confront with them, which is exactly impossible. Because of what he/she has been through in his own personal relations he feels guilty instead of feeling angry; he also feels inadequate and humiliated.

The play created by the camera in the last part both shows the purpose of the film and gives an area which can create memory and where pain could be kept. Yet, the intense dramatization and its escaping from the reality of the coup and the people responsible for the violence make one think that the film has difficulty in keeping the pain of the wound it touches and the emotions caused by September 12th in the area its camera presents.

When we come to discuss *Beynelmilel*, we see that the story parenthesizes the coup and criticizes it. Besides, it criticizes the ways to criticize. The film makes it easier for the viewer to come across with the trauma of September 12th by its melodramatic elements and by creating the feeling of nostalgia. These look like defending when trying to explain the trauma. The memory of the past is mixed with the feeling of nostalgia. But the past is not denied, it is not substituted with other losses or events and it is not censored. Shortly, it represents past with nostalgia and melancholia by making a collective wish real; but it also makes clear what is going in the outer reality at the time.

*Beynelmilel* shows who the perpetrators are, how the frightened people idealize the aggressor and try to nest in his power. Perpetrators are ordinary people who are in an ideology which is not ordinary. What create anger are not them, but the system that creates them. Military authority

is obviously pointed. It is made fun of and blamed. The film does not make the scenes more dramatic by various strategies or by traumatizing the viewer. On the other hand, we do not see the people that violence directly targeted. Gülemdam, his father Abuzer and Haydar experience unfortunate things because they are naive. There is not a victim of September 12th with whom the viewer can identify themselves; instead, there are naive and good people around as victims who praise their aggressor.

Political victims the coup targets and what they have been through are not shown, perpetrators and their violence are not put together. Still black humor both creates a safe area against pain and tries to explain the story of pain and loss through its criticism. The use of music in the film also has the function of rebellion and to make a memory like black humor. These two elements create opportunity for viewer collectively and one by one to see the aggression and direct it to the external real object. Shortly, black humor and music enable a transitional space focusing on external reality in *Beynelmilel*.

Working through of social experiences individually and collectively is obstructed during and after the September 12th process. *Beynelmilel* makes the viewer understand what kind of a feeling it is in its end. After the tragic events the protagonist has experienced, we see that the time has suddenly passed. Yet, no time has passed for the viewer, nothing has happened during the time for them, no story has been told. We wonder and think about what has happened. As the protagonist comes across with the anthem International, the events are like to have just happened for him/her,

too. So the viewer feels that the trauma is not cured, the impacts of September 12 are still alive and the issue is not closed, people and society are still injured and feel the pain.

Considering these films in terms of Herman's periods (1992), they reflect the effort to remember and mourn the traumatic experiences during the September 12th period. There are common parts in both films: melodramatic elements, the loss of mother, the nostalgia that making the past and people in the past infantile, the loss happened in the end of the films. These elements in *Babam ve Oğlum* have the function of relief and denial of the reasons of trauma for the viewer. But in *Beynelminel* especially black humor is not only used to keep the viewer safe in the reality of the film, it is also used to create a sarcastic style. There are two major differences between two movies. *Beynelmilel* uses audio-visual elements and dialogues a lot with the purpose of creating historicity and memory about the period, and it does not connect the drama in the story to the end of the film in the way to relieve the viewer. In *Babam ve Oğlum* both the feeling of suffering is used a lot and the real traumatic fact is displaced with other events. After intensive dramatization, the viewer is made to leave in relief in the end of the film. *Beynelmilel* has an intention not to let the viewer abdicate their responsibility in what they have witnessed by relaxing and forgetting.

In conclusion, both films have the attempt to reflect pathological mourning and mourning of losses. However, while *Babam ve Oğlum* is in the effort to give catharsis and relief to the viewer, *Beynelmilel* tries to focus

on the loss in the past by making the guiltiness affect visible and to make people think of the past events.

### **5.3. On the Countertransference of Analyzer**

It has been thought that, presenting the analyst's experiences and ideas on the study would be enriching.

I have come to realize that discussions on trauma encompass a wide variety of different disciplines and it is really hard to handle them in the limits of one and without an interdisciplinary approach. This study has also made me understand once again that trauma is an intensely felt but hardly spoken reality. It is an experience that has not yet been verbalized and hard to express to ourselves and to one another. Another observation is that trauma is harder to grasp as you try to talk about it. This condition has lead to talking more about trauma and the study, and talking them over and over again. As I have accepted that I could not cover all that I want to tell about, I put an end to this tiring effort when I reminded myself that this study was an intersection of my subjectivity with September 12th and its representations (movies). Although I have often felt the weight of the study material on my shoulders, ending the study freed me from this weight. In addition to all these, my biggest difficulty was to have to discuss such a hard matter; a traumatic experience in another language other than my mother tongue.

## 6. Conclusion

The films reflect the collective structure; collective wishes, fantasies, conflicts and defenses. September 12th is one of the traumatic periods that happened in the near past, affected and has been affecting social and individual lives deeply. Trauma experience is shaped both with fantasy and with external reality. There is always loss, but every loss is not traumatic. Symbolization, play and creativity occur through losses. What determines how traumatic a loss, is the environmental conditions and distinctive structure of the subject who has experienced it. The density of the damage in social trauma is determined by how the social and cultural conditions are furnished and how they provide means for handling the trauma.

Art works are mediators for society and individual to deal with the loss and work through it (naming and narrating it; making the story of the past in order to continue from the point stopped in life). Of course people have confused this effort with fantasies and wishes.

Two films including September 12th in its plot have been examined in this study. The films are taken as a collective product. There are elements that are independent from the intentions of the scenarists. Most of them are technical issues, like how the film is made by the director, or how the acting is managed. The issues that are not related to them, but related to what scenarist and director reflect because of the cultural effects. The maker (director and scenarist) convey the dynamics of the cultural structure by

being aware of it or not. These dynamics consist of both ideological and psychological needs and these needs do not always conflict each other, sometimes even strengthen. The story of a political trauma is not wanted to be talked about by the dominant ideology, and when it is intended to there are psychological needs, fantasies and defenses that make it difficult to create the story of that trauma.

In the frame of these, the material of the films *Babam ve Oğlum* and “Beynelminel” has been examined, and what they mean and what potential they have in the interaction with the viewer has been considered.

Humor and melodramatic elements in the stories of the films make it easier to be connected by shaping the disturbing and uncanny things. Both styles are also defenses to protect the subject against facing with suffering. Symptoms, defenses and acting-outs both constitute a vicious circle, a structure for the reproduction of the problem, and unsettle the present balance that, in fact, exists in an unbearable way. It is useful to take into consideration the defenses in the movies both as an obstacle and as a potential.

Films could be said to be “shared linking objects” in the collective structure like other cultural objects (Volkan, 2006). That is, although they help society to mourn and create hope to regain losses; they also trigger people to accept the reality. At this point, how much the loss is denied, how the reality is shown determines if the disturbing affect (which is lived like a repetitive acting-out) will become a memory or not.

In melancholy individual rejects the loss object, identifies herself with this object in order to be with it, and experiences incessantly the loss in a state of mourning that cannot be experienced fully. This state of denial of the reality is easier than confrontation and accepting the loss. Both films use a defense mechanism one by bringing laugh to the fore, and the other cry. But the black humor that *Beynelmilel* is used provides a relationship with reality involving aggressive feelings, rather than denial of it. In terms of collective structure, *Babam ve Oğlum* reveals an acting-out process that is emerged from the need of mourning, and *Beynelmilel* reveals mourning and effort of working-through by defining both this melancholic acting-out and the object of the aggression and loss.

*Babam ve Oğlum* realizes the weakness of the society for talking about September 12 and offers the viewer the same position. Reality of coup is embedded into film, but its memory cannot be created. Albeit the film narrates the trauma, it cannot take viewer out of melancholy to the reality (this move don't need to be positive) by its displacements and it enforces the distance between its own reality and viewer by condense dramatization. The viewer cannot go beyond the self-pity and remembering the past by watching the film; especially if she has a traumatic past because of the coup.

It is not mentioned here that narrating the historical reality. If it is taken into consideration that the memory generated from today to past is a subjective representation, of course there is not a unique and constant state of the memory without involvement of subjective creation processes. What is actually mentioned is that narrating the story of sufferers without creating



victimhood, and representing this experience with including the perpetrators' story. That is, seeing the unique and simple experience with the historical and great reality.

In a collective point of view, *Babam ve Oğlum* shows that having pity for the victim is easier than facing with the perpetrators. Collective system would like to cry, relax and forget. The film opens an appropriate door for mourning by telling ordinary sufferings; but it reflects the wounds of trauma, a depressive catharsis and forgetting rather than a confrontation.

Whereas *Beynelmilel* also causes catharsis through melodramatic and nostalgic elements, it also creates and makes people live another collective experience by having a story that turns the aggression to the outside through the black part of its humor. Although the story does not deny the reality of the loss, it does not show the sharpness of the relation between the victim and the perpetrators and weakens the representation of the past by attributing innocent and childish characteristics to them. These two films with similar emotional processes differ in *Beynelmilel*'s attitude of trying not to evade responsibility of reality while helping the viewer to hold on the world of the film.

Of course personal preferences of the script writers and/or directors are important. Above all, telling something about the September 12 requires being conscientious more than telling nothing about it. In this sense, with respect to personal past of the director of *Beynelmilel* (he had been in prison for a long time after coup) and his political attitude, he concerns more directly and he has a conscientious attitude towards the issue; and the

director of *Babam ve Oğlum* has a personal sensitivity towards the coup to mention it briefly. If we take them into consideration in a collective manner, the former one endeavours to mourn, exhibits a melancholic feeling of victimhood like an acting-out, cannot be able to confront with the coup that causes traumas, however (especially with its doing well at the box-office) opens a door to encourage other narrations about September 12. The latter one, entering from this door, exhibits a rich story with a louder voice.

### **6.1. Suggestions for Further Studies**

The movies referring to September 12th can be subject to a wider analysis through the concepts on trauma, loss and confrontation. Such a study will provide valuable impressions over further studies of both culture specific and generally collective trauma.

Besides, studies with viewer groups will be interesting to display how cultural tools function in cases of trauma.

A further examination of the cultural life before and after September 12th will help to maintain a better understanding of the social context led by the trauma and also will be useful in narration and procession of the trauma.

Sociological, political, cultural and psychological studies will constitute a significant step towards confrontation. It is very significant to study how the September 12th had affected individuals, what kind of atrocities, injustices and violations it has brought. Either they are executed

by academicians or by civil initiatives; these kinds of studies will enable and encourage seeking legal remedy and justice despite impunity.

Talking, writing, picturing and filming recollections of September 12th must continue avoiding the trap of forming a victimhood discourse.

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## **Appendices**

## Appendix A:

### The list of September 12 films

Şerif Gören “Yol”	1981	Tunç Başaran “Uçurtmayı Vurmasınlar”	1989
Mesut Uçkan “Öç”	1984	Ümit Efekan “Darbe”	1990
Zeki Ökten “Ses”	1986	Atıf Yılmaz “Bekle Dedim Gölgeye”	1990
Şerif Gören “Sen Türkülerini Söyle”	1986	Yusuf Kurçenli “Çözümler”	1993
Sinan Çetin “Prenses”	1986	Handan İpekçi “Babam Askerde”	1994
Zeki Alasya “Dikenli Yol”	1986	Tomris Giritlioğlu “80. Adım”	1995
Ali Habip Özentürk “Su da Yanar”	1986	Zülfü Livaneli “Sis”	1998
Yaşar Seriner “Sevgi Çıkmazı”	1986	Atıf Yılmaz “Eylül Fırtınası”	1999
Muammer Özer “Kara Sevdalı Bulut”	1987	Yılmaz Erdoğan “Vizontele Tuuba”	2004
Erden Kıral “Av Zamanı”	1987	Çağan Irmak “Babam ve Oğlum”	2006
Şerif Gören “Sen de Yüreğinde Sevgiye yer Aç”	1987	Ömer Uğur “Eve Dönüş”	2006
İrfan Tözüm “İkili Oyunlar”	1989	Sırrı Süreyya Önder “Beynelmilel”	2007
Memduh Ün “Bütün Kapılar Kapalıydı”	1989	Atıl İnanç “Zincirbozan”	2007
Ziya Öztan “Baharın Bittiği Yer”	1989	Murat Saraçoğlu “O... Çocukları”	2008